

# **IOWA BIRD LIFE**

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## **IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION**





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*The Iowa Ornithologists' Union, founded in 1923, encourages interest in the identification, study, and protection of birds in Iowa and seeks to unite those who have these interests in common. Iowa Bird Life and IOU News are quarterly publications of the Union.*

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# Meet an Iowa Birder: Hank Zaletel

Linda Zaletel



Hank Zaletel

If you had asked Hank Zaletel in his younger years what he would spend most of his adult life doing, it would never have been birding. He was going to be a librarian and historian! Well, he became both!

Hank was born in Ames on 8 April 1947; his father was attending graduate school at Iowa State University. In 1953, the family moved to Des Moines where he grew up. After graduating from Dowling High School, he attended State College of Iowa in Cedar Falls until he was drafted into the army in 1967. He served with the 25th Infantry Division at Cu Chi, Viet Nam in military intelligence for one year. He does not remember seeing a single bird while he was there.

After discharge from the military, he attended Grandview University and graduated from Drake University in 1973. While attending college, he worked full time at *The Des Moines Register and Tribune*. It was there that I met him in the summer of 1970. During the summer of 1971, we backpacked and stayed in youth hostels in Europe for seven weeks. We managed not to kill each other and became engaged in November and married the following August. In 1981, we were blessed with our first daughter Anne and in 1983 Elizabeth was added to the family.

In 1975, Hank and I moved to the Chicago area so that he could attend library school at Rosary College, now called Dominican University. Until this time, Hank had had no interest whatsoever in watching birds. While we were in Des Moines, my mother and I would take birding trips to the future Saylorville Lake construction area. Hank preferred to stay in bed and sleep late.

When we got to Chicago, we didn't know anyone and had little money. I suggested to him that we attend Illinois Audubon Society meetings and those of the Chicago Ornithological Society. Hank was soon hooked on birds! One of the memorable trips during the time was to Point Pelee in Ontario, Canada. While we were there, we noted a large crowd of birders. Upon investigation, we discovered that Roger Tory Peterson was leading a field trip. That day he was not using binoculars. He was identifying all birds by vocalizations. At the back of the pack unnoticed was Hal Harrison, the author of many articles and books on birding and, at the time, the editor of the *National Wildlife* magazine.

Hank acquired his library degree from Dominican University in 1976. He has been a librarian ever since. When we moved back to Ames in 1977 so that I could attend Iowa State University, he got a job at the Iowa Department of Transportation. He continues to have his library there but has been employed by the Institute for Transportation State Uni-

versity since 2002. In addition, Hank has served on many local, state, and national library committees and boards during the last thirty years.

Since childhood, Hank has had a love of history that included books, photos, maps, and paper ephemera. In his capacity as a librarian, he assisted in writing a grant to obtain funds to establish an archive, hire a consultant and interns, and create a web-accessible visual database. He established his own visual database utilizing the Flickr web utility. His collections can be found under his moniker *photolibrarian*.

Hank has been a member of IOU since 1977. He has written many articles on Iowa ornithological history, book reviews, birding areas, and Iowa birders for *Iowa Bird Life*. In 1982, he agreed to be treasurer. He served until 1985 when he and I became the first editors of the *IOU News*. We held this post until 2000. In 2001, he agreed to fill in as vice president when Tom Johnson ascended to the presidency.

He has served on the IOU Publications Committee and is currently the chair of Library/Historical Committee. In this capacity, he takes correspondence, including copies of business that occurs on the listserv, committee minutes and notes, newspaper clippings, and other material, to the IOU archive at the Special Collections Department at the Iowa State University Library.

Hank has also been active in the Big Bluestem Audubon Society of Ames. He has served as field trip chair, Christmas Bird Count compiler, and vice president. He is currently the archivist serving in much the same capacity as for the IOU.

In 1996, Hank and Stephen J. Dinsmore co-authored the *The Birds of Story County* (Dinsmore and Zaletel 1996). There have been two subsequent editions with the last being published in 2001.

When the family moved to Colo in 1981, I was a park ranger working the night shift for Story County Conservation Board. With the arrival of our children, Hank had the responsibility of feeding, bathing, and putting our kids to bed. Birding was a luxury. It was then that he discovered the Colo wetland complex. Since many of the wetlands could be viewed from the road, his children soon became seasoned birdwatchers from their car seats. Hank soon had a dream. It consisted of the acquisition of these wetlands so that they could be preserved and made available for public use. Even though Hank is not a hunter, he has served as secretary and vice president of Story County Pheasants Forever for more than 23 years. Through his persistence and with the help of many environmental and governmental agencies, the 625-acre Colo Bog Wetland complex was acquired over a 13-year period (Zaletel 1984, 2009).

For those of you who have known Hank for a while this is old news, but for those just getting acquainted the following information could prove quite helpful: (1) if you happen to spend the night in the same room with Hank, bring ear plugs!, (2) if you are doing any high-altitude birding, make sure that he has brought his happy pills, and finally, (3) in some circles he is considered a birding jinx because of his many failures at finding rare birds! Getting past these minor character quirks, you will find Hank an enjoyable companion as I have for the past 37 years.

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## Field Reports—Summer 2009

*James J. Dinsmore*

### WEATHER

Rainfall was somewhat above average in June with totals above average in southern Iowa and below average in northern Iowa. Overall rainfall averaged 5.22 inches, 0.58 above normal and the 51st wettest June in 137 years of records. Columbus Junction in southeastern Iowa was the wettest with 12.41 inches of rain and Oelwein with 2.47 inches was the dry spot. June temperatures were moderate and averaged 69.4, 0.4 degrees below normal. The first half of the month was cooler than normal and the second half warmer than normal except for a few days in the 60s at the end of June. Daytime highs reached the 90s somewhere in Iowa on every day from 17 to 27 June with a high of 99 on 23 June in Glenwood. The temperature low was 39 on 4 June in Cresco, Elkader, and Sibley.

Rainfall in July averaged 4.56 inches, 0.31 inches above average and the 38th wettest July on record. Extremes were 2.03 inches at Newton and 8.95 at Anamosa. Generally wet weather occurred during the first half of July, especially in east-central Iowa, and drier weather prevailed for the second half of the month. July temperatures averaged 68.0, 5.8 degrees below normal and the coolest July on record. This was produced by a northwesterly flow of cool air that dominated Iowa's weather during the month. Temperatures reached 90 degrees only one day (24 July) and those highs were confined to west-central and southwestern Iowa. The high temperature was 93 degrees at Onawa and Ankeny. Low temperature extremes were 42 at Sheldon, Sibley, and Spencer on 19 July and Elkader on 20 July.

Storm wise it was a mild summer. Severe storms with high winds and some hail were reported a number of days in mid-June with the worst the hail that fell on 17 June



*James J. Dinsmore*



in parts of Chickasaw and Fayette counties. Southeastern Iowa was the wettest area with some flooding but nothing like the extensive flooding reported in 2008. Severe weather in July included some hail in northwestern Iowa on 9 July, near Des Moines on 14 July, and in northeastern Iowa on 24 July. Overall, weather patterns seemed to be suitable for good nesting success for most bird species.

## HABITAT CONDITIONS

Although Iowa has a diversity of habitats, clearly it originally was a prairie state. Perhaps 70–80% of Iowa was once covered with native prairie that provided habitat for a diversity of species. Most of this prairie has been converted to other uses so that a few bird species disappeared from Iowa and others have greatly reduced populations. For some grassland species, Iowa is one of the key states in their future survival. The good news is that in the past several decades, the Iowa DNR, federal agencies, county conservation boards, several nonprofit conservation groups, and many private individuals have gotten involved in trying to preserve Iowa's remaining remnants of native prairie and to restore prairie vegetation to many other areas. For example, this summer, the Iowa DNR dedicated its 14th Bird Conservation Area, the Lower Morse Lake Grassland BCA in Wright County, which provides additional grassland habitat.

Since the mid-1980s, a federal agriculture program, the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), has provided hundreds of thousands of additional acres of grassland habitat in Iowa. This program has been considered a major factor in helping grassland birds in Iowa and elsewhere. However, changes that are taking place with this program threaten how long the CRP will continue to provide that habitat.

One wonders if the decline in Ring-necked Pheasant numbers in the past few years is an indication of what may happen to the populations of other grassland birds. The most successful non-native wildlife species ever introduced into Iowa, the recent decline in pheasant populations perhaps deserves more concern by birders than most will probably give it. Prior to the advent of the CRP in the mid-1980s, pheasants were doing poorly in northern Iowa, their historical stronghold. The introduction of CRP, which encouraged landowners to plant large blocks of grassland habitat, seemed to stem that decline, and pheasants and other grassland birds seem to have responded positively. In 1993, 2.2 million acres in Iowa were enrolled in the CRP. That total dropped to 2 million acres in September 2007 and 1.7 million acres this past summer. In September 2009, another 110,000 acres (170 square miles) was lost and more losses will occur in the next several years. Some worry that the program will eventually be phased out, and the conservation benefits (and grassland habitat) that we have enjoyed for the past several decades will disappear, just as happened with the Soil Bank program back in the 1960s. If that happens, populations of grassland birds such as Bobolink, Grasshopper Sparrow, and both meadowlarks as well as pheasants undoubtedly will decline.

## BIRDS OF SUMMER

### Breeding Species

Probably the biggest news this summer was the discovery of Iowa's first nesting Alder Flycatcher. Other good finds among nesting species were Red-necked Grebe, American

White Pelican, Greater Prairie-Chicken, Barn Owl, and Black-billed Magpie. Among species that have been reintroduced into Iowa, Trumpeter Swan, Osprey, and Peregrine Falcon all had good nesting success. Bald Eagle, Sandhill Crane, and Eurasian Collared-Dove, species that have colonized the state on their own, all colonized new nesting sites. Iowa's only Ring-billed Gull colony apparently had a successful year, Henslow's Sparrows were reported from a fourth of Iowa's counties, and Clay-colored Sparrows continued to expand their presence in northern Iowa.

With a number of people carefully surveying atlas blocks, several interesting nesting reports were generated by that program. Among those, nesting reports for several forest dwelling species including Veery, Northern Parula, Prothonotary Warbler, Louisiana Waterthrush, Kentucky Warbler, and Hooded Warbler stand out.

Among species that had more limited success, both Piping Plover and Least Tern continued to occupy their nesting site near Council Bluffs although I received no information on nesting by the terns. A few Black Terns were reported nesting but no one mentioned Forster's Terns nesting. Northern Bobwhite were found in a number of counties, but only in extreme southern Iowa did they appear to be holding their own. Among the less common waterfowl, no one mentioned nesting by Gadwall, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, or Redhead, species that typically nest somewhere in Iowa yearly.

After last summer's large wading bird concentration in Fremont County, southern wading birds were largely missing this summer with only a few reports of Little Blue Heron, Cattle Egret, and ibis. And after the many reports of nesting Pine Siskins in spring (Kenne 2009), none of the siskins found this summer appeared to be nesting.

### **Migrants**

After the big fallout of passerines in early June last year, no such event occurred this year. Late migrants included the usual early June shorebirds, terns, flycatchers, warblers, and a few others. Midsummer reports of three species that don't nest in the state, Black-throated Green Warbler, Northern Waterthrush, and White-throated Sparrow, were about typical for summer.

By late June/early July, the usual southbound shorebirds started to arrive, and by the end of the period, some species were present in good numbers. Likewise, migrant American White Pelicans, Ring-billed Gulls, and Forster's and Black terns were moving through Iowa by late July. Two Nashville Warblers and several Least Flycatchers in late July seemed to be the first indication of southward movement of passerines. A late July Red-breasted Nuthatch most likely was an early migrant too.

### **Unusual Species**

It was a fairly slow summer for rare birds. Only two Accidental species, Mottled Duck and Neotropic Cormorant, and one Casual species, Bewick's Wren, were reported. Other good finds this summer included Ross's Goose, Greater Scaup, Red-necked Grebe, Western Grebe, Little Blue Heron, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Black-necked Stilt, Red-necked Phalarope, White-winged Dove, Short-eared Owl, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Blackburnian Warbler, and Pine Warbler. And yes, the Black-headed Gull made its appearance at Spirit Lake again this summer.

## SPECIES DATA

All CAPS = Accidental or Casual species, \* = documented. County names are in italics. Full names of contributors are at the end of the article. Abbreviations used: **ad** = adult, **A** = area, **juv** = juvenile, **L** = lake, **M** = marsh, **m.ob.** = many observers, **NWR** = national wildlife refuge, **P** = park, **ph** = photo, **R** = river, **RA** = recreation area, **Res** = reservoir, **se half** = diagonal se half, **SF** = state forest, **Sl** = slough, **SP** = state park, **Twp** = township, **WA** = wildlife area, **WMA** = wildlife management area, **WPA** = waterfowl production area, **yg** = young.

Key to maps: shading = species reported in county. In most cases, the species was probably nesting in the county although evidence was presented only in a few cases.

**Greater White-fronted Goose:** All: one 1 Jul at Crystal Hills WA *Hancock* (RGo).

**Snow Goose:** Most: 6 on 12 Jun near

South Twin L *Calhoun* (RIA, PHA). Elsewhere singles were found in *Adair*, *Clay*, *Hamilton*, *Story*, *Tama*, and *Woodbury* (m.ob.).

**Ross's Goose:** All: one 12 Jun near South Twin L *Calhoun* (RIA, PHA).

**Trumpeter Swan:** A record 37 pairs attempted to nest this year with 31 or 32 nests successful (RA).

**Gadwall:** All: one 13 Jun at Lewis Bottoms Rd *Linn* (BSc), 7 at Diamond Lake WA *Dickinson* and 2 at Grover's L *Dickinson*, both 26 Jun (SJD), and one 4 Jul at Sunken Grove L *Pocahontas* (SSP).

**American Wigeon:** All: a male 12 Jul at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (SJD).

**MOTTLED DUCK:** A male 8, 9, 14 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (\*SJD-ph, \*JB, JG) is Iowa's second record. The previous record was at the same site in July 2006 (Dinsmore and Brees 2007; see note in this issue).

**Northern Shoveler:** All: 2 on 29 Jun at Moeckley Prairie *Polk* (SJD) and 2 on 19 Jul at Lewis Bottoms Rd *Linn* (SJD). Broods were found at two *Winnebago* sites in July (SSP).

**Northern Pintail:** All: a female 1 Jul at Myre Sl *Winnebago* (SSP).

**Green-winged Teal:** All: a male 17 Jun at Mallard WPA *Kossuth* (MCK), 3 on 17, 18 Jul at Pool 11 *Dubuque* (SJD), and a female 24 Jul at Polk City WA *Polk* (SJD).

**Canvasback:** All: a male 3 Jul at Crystal Hills WA *Hancock* (RGo) and 3 on 7 Jul at Pool 19 *Lee* (SJD).

**Redhead:** All: one



Ross's Goose, South Twin Lake, Calhoun, 12 June 2009. Photograph by Reid Allen, West Des Moines, IA.





*Trumpeter Swan with young, marsh in northern Boone, 18 July 2009. Photograph by Jim Moreland, Boone, IA.*

2 Jun at Zirbel Sl *Cerro Gordo* (CJF), 5 on 7 Jun at Union Slough NWR *Kossuth* (MCK), 5 on 14 Jun at Grover's L *Dickinson* (TLu), 4 on 26 Jun at Diamond Lake WA *Dickinson* (SJD), and 2 or 3 on 27 Jun at Eagle L *Hancock* (PH, MPr, SJD).

**Ring-necked Duck:** All: singles 2 Jun at Myre Sl *Winnebago* (JB), 13 Jun, 19 Jul at Lewis Bottoms Rd *Linn* (BSc, SJD), 21 Jun at Eagle L *Hancock* (PH), and 2 on 26 Jun at Grover's L *Dickinson* (SJD).

**Greater Scaup:** A male 3 Jun, 22 Jul at Crystal Hills WA *Hancock* appeared to be injured (RGo). It is Iowa's fourth summer record and the first since 1988.

**Lesser Scaup:** Mostly singles were found in *Boone*, *Dickinson*, *Hardin*, *Lee*, *Linn*, *Pocahontas*, and *Story* (WO, TLu, SJD, MPr, BSc, SSP).

**Hooded Merganser:** Broods were found in *Hancock*, *Plymouth*, *Pocahontas*, *Polk*, *Sioux*, and *Winneshiek* (PH, GLV, SSP, DTh, DK).

**Ruddy Duck:** All: 2 on 2 Jun at Myre Sl *Winnebago* (JB), 12 on 7 Jun at Union

Slough NWR *Kossuth* (MCK), up to 12 on 21, 27 Jun at Eagle L *Hancock* (PH), and a brood at Sunken Grove L *Pocahontas* (SSP).

**Northern Bobwhite:** With reports from 14 counties, as in 2008, bobwhite were found in s Iowa, north along the western border to *Plymouth* (GLV), and in a few counties in e-cen Iowa. Only in *Decatur* do bobwhite seem to be doing well (ZM).



**Gray Partridge:** One or 2 were found in *Boone*, *Buena Vista*, *Cherokee*, *Story*, *Winnebago*, and *Worth* (m.ob.), all in its usual nw and n-cen Iowa range. The only broods mentioned were in *Kossuth* and *Wright* (SSP).

**Ring-necked Pheasant:** The 380,000 taken during the 2008–2009 hunting season was the fewest on record. Populations are about the same this year (Iowa DNR) and remain reduced from levels of just a few years ago.

**Ruffed Grouse:** All: one 19 Jul at Bankston P *Dubuque* (JG).

**Greater Prairie-Chicken:** A nest was found in May at Kellerton WA *Ringgold* (THo). Four males were seen there in late June, and a female with a chick were seen around 6 Jul (THo).

**Common Loon:** All: singles 14 Jun n of Marengo *Iowa* (PB), 3 Jul at Viking Lake SP *Montgomery* (SJD), 17 Jul at Colo Ponds *Story* (HZ), and 19 Jul at Pleasant Creek RA *Linn* (SJD). At Spirit L *Dickinson*, 3 were seen 26 Jun and 4 on 29 Jul (SJD, MPr).

**Pied-billed Grebe:** Nests or broods were found in *Dickinson*, *Hancock*, *Kossuth*, *Linn*, *Pocahontas*, *Polk*, and *Winnebago* (MPr, SSP, BSc, DP, DTh, JB).

**Red-necked Grebe:** At Eagle L *Hancock*, one or 2 were seen 1–27 Jun (TLu, RGo, PH, SJD) and 2 ad with a downy yg were found 21 Jun (PH, MPr). Elsewhere, 7 ad were at Grover's L *Dickinson* 26 Jun (SJD).

**Western Grebe:** All: one 7 Jun at Ventura Cerro *Gordo* (PH), 2 on 24 Jun at Little Wall L *Hamilton* (SJD), one 13 Jul at East Okoboji L *Dickinson* (ETh), and 1–4 from 1–27 Jun at Eagle L *Hancock* (TLu, RGo, PH, MPr). Two 27 Jun at Eagle L *Hancock* were building a nest (SJD).

**American White Pelican:** Pelicans again nested on spoil islands in the Mississippi R *Clinton* with about 400 yg fledged (RE). Late migrants or summering birds included 149 on 3 Jun at Owego Wetlands *Woodbury* (GLV), 500 on 27 Jun at Eagle L *Hancock* (PH), 38 on 1 Jul at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD), and 11 on 4 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD). The 142 on 14 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (JG) and 73 on 17 Jul at Pool 11 *Dubuque* were probably early migrants. With 1,828 on 25 Jul at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD) and 300 on 29 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (DP), migration was underway.

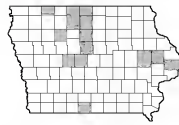
**NEOTROPIC CORMORANT:** A sub-

adult 5 Jul at Elm L *Wright* (\*SJD-ph) was Iowa's fifth record and the second summer record (see note in this issue).

**Double-crested Cormorant:** About 1,100 nests were found on the spoil islands in the Mississippi R *Clinton* (RE), the most nests I have heard of in Iowa. Elsewhere, about 30 nests were at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* 13 Jun (CRE). Large mid-summer concentrations included 79 on 17 Jun at Union Slough NWR *Kossuth* (MCK), 80 on 27 Jun at Eagle L *Hancock* (PH), and 32 on 5 Jul at Elm L *Wright* (SJD).

**American Bittern:** All: one 27 Jun at Spring Run WA *Dickinson* (SJD), an ad and fledgling 30 Jun near Bjorkboda M *Hamilton* (SJD), one 5 Jul at Big Wall L *Wright* (SJD), 2 on 10 Jul at Panicum Prairie *Worth* (SSP), and 2 fledglings on 24 Jul near Ames *Story* (M Meetz fide HZ).

**Least Bittern:** Nine of 13 reports came from counties in the Prairie Pothole region where suitable habitat is most available (m.ob.). Others were found at Muskrat Sl *Jones* (CRE), Goose L *Clinton* (BSc), Lamoni *Decatur* (SJD), and a brood at Lewis Bottoms Rd *Linn* (SJD, BSc).



**Great Blue Heron:** Peak post-breeding concentrations were 159 on 25 Jul at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD) and 160 on 31 Jul at Runnells WA *Polk* (SJD).

**Great Egret:** Up to 8 were found in 8 counties scattered across Iowa (m.ob.). Large post-breeding concentrations were 80 on 19 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (DP), 248 on 25 Jul at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD), and 83 on 31 Jul at Chichaqua A *Polk* (SJD).

**Little Blue Heron:** All: singles 22 Jun at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO), 13 Jul at Brett Klima A *Black Hawk* (TSS), and an imm 25 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (DP).

**Cattle Egret:** All: singles 21 Jun at

Little Wall L *Hamilton* (SJD) and 8 Jul at Owego Wetlands *Woodbury* (MPr).

**Green Heron:** A few were found in 13 counties mostly in the e two-thirds of Iowa (m.ob.), including broods in *Clay* and *Emmet* (SSP).

**Black-crowned Night-Heron:** All: 3 ad 27 Jun at Eagle L *Hancock* (PH, MPr).

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron:** All: one 22 Jul at Ringgold WA *Ringgold* (THo), and an ad 25 Jul at Colyn A *Lucas* (JG).

***Plegadis* sp.:** One 5 Jun at Meier WA *Hardin* was seen only briefly in flight (MPr).

**Turkey Vulture:** Large concentrations included 70 on 2 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD) and 92 on 7 Jul at L Rathbun *Appanoose* (SJD).

**Osprey:** Osprey had a great year with 12 of 13 pairs having successful nests. Three pairs were active at Coralville Res *Johnson*, four in the Cedar Falls-Waterloo area, and two in *Polk*. Single pairs were active in *Appanoose*, *Boone*, *Linn*, and *Woodbury* (PSc). A total of 20 young from Wisconsin and Minnesota were released in *Dickinson*, *Dubuque*, *Guthrie*, *Marion*, and *Warren* (BEh, PSc). Away from nesting sites, singles were seen in *Buchanan*, *Cerro Gordo*, *Story*, *Union*, and *Webster* (SSP, RGo, SJD, WO). Correction: Only two Osprey nests were successful in 2008, not the eight I reported earlier (IBL 79:173).

**Mississippi Kite:** One or 2 were seen from 14 Jun–22 Jul, all in or near Des Moines *Polk* (JG, AB, RIA, PHA, SJD).

**Bald Eagle:** Iowa has about 230 eagle territories, not all of which are active every year. This year probably about 210 nests were active. Nests found in *Cerro Gordo* and *Emmet* increase the total to 86 counties with nests (SSH, BEh).

**Northern Harrier:** All: adults carrying food in July at Barringer Sl *Clay* (SSP),

near Burr Oak L *Emmet* (SSP), Brush Creek Canyon *Fayette* (JG), Elk Grove WA *Guthrie* (DTh), and a brood at Panicum Prairie *Worth* (SSP) where 4 were seen 21 Jul (CJF) indicated nesting. Elsewhere, one was seen 1 Jun at Eagle L *Hancock* (TLu), 2 on 21 Jul were at Elk Creek M *Worth* (CJF), and one was seen several times in July at Kellerton WA *Ringgold* (THo).

**Sharp-shinned Hawk:** One 15 Jun in Mason City *Cerro Gordo* (PH) adds to the few summer reports of this species.

**Cooper's Hawk:** Reported from 18 counties, scattered across much of Iowa (m.ob.). Nests or broods were found in *Allamakee*, *Floyd*, *Kossuth*, *Marshall*, *Polk*, *Poweshiek*, and *Winnebago* (DK, SSP, MCK, MPr, RIC, SJD).



**Red-shouldered Hawk:** One or 2 were found in *Allamakee*, *Bremer*, *Buchanan*, *Lee*, *Lucas*, and *Polk* (CRE, SSP, DP, SJD, JG, JB). Nests or broods were found at Wapsi Bluffs Access *Black Hawk* (SSP), *Black Hawk P* *Black Hawk* (SSP), near Aldo Leopold Wetlands *Bremer* (SSP), and Waukon Jct *Allamakee* (DK).

**Broad-winged Hawk:** All: singles in *Boone*, *Hancock*, *Kossuth*, *Johnson*, *Lee*, and *Woodbury* (LGD, JB, MCK, JLF, CRE, TLu) and a nest with a fledgling 7 Jul at Lick Creek Unit *Lee* (SJD).

**Peregrine Falcon:** Nine of the 13 eyries active this summer were successful and produced 26 yg, the most since the reintroduction program was started. Successful sites included *Polk-2*, *Allamakee*, *Clinton*, *Des Moines*, *Linn*, *Louisa*, *Scott*, and *Wapello* (BEh, PSc).

**Virginia Rail:** Broods were found in ne *Boone* (SJD), at Myre Sl *Winnebago* (SSP), and at Snake Creek M *Greene* (LGD). Elsewhere, up to 3 were found in *Kossuth*, *Polk* and *Worth* (SSP, DTh, JB).

**Sora:** One or 2 were found in *Boone*, *Clinton*, *Hancock*, *Linn*, *Polk*, and *Warren* (m.ob.); one 20 Jun at Eddyville Sand Prairie *Wapello* (AB) was the furthest south.

**Common Moorhen:** All: 2 nests 13 Jun at Errington M *Polk* (DTh) and 2 pairs still there 13 Jul (MAC), 2 ad 3 Jul at Lamon *Decatur* (SJD), 1 ad 19 Jul at Cardinal M *Winnesiek* (DK), and a brood 26 Jul at Goose L *Greene* (SJD).

**American Coot:** Broods were noted in *Hancock*, *Humboldt*, *Linn*, and *Winnebago* (MPR, SJD, SSP).

**Sandhill Crane:** Cranes continue to do well with nesting activity reported mostly in the e half of Iowa. A pair with a colt 24 Jun at Riverton WA *Fremont* (KVS) seems to be the first recent nesting record in sw Iowa. Since nesting Sandhill Cranes returned to Iowa in 1992, they have nested in 19 counties (BEh, PS). An ad 13, 15 Jul in *Woodbury* (TLu) was in w Iowa where this species is rare in summer.

**Black-bellied Plover:** All: 2 on 14 Jun (JLF) and 1 on 15 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (DP).

**American Golden-Plover:** All: one 18 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (RIA, PHA) and a molting ad 29 Jul at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD).

**Semipalmated Plover:** First: 2 on 14 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD) and one 15 Jul at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO). Most: 42 on 30 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD).

**Piping Plover:** Eight ad and 4 yg 8 Jul at MidAmerican Ponds *Pottawattamie* (MPR) indicated some nesting success there. Elsewhere, an ad was at Saylorville Res *Polk* 22 Jul (SJD).

**Killdeer:** High counts of post breeders were 776 on 24 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD), 398 on 29 Jul at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD), and 350 on 29 Jul at Dan Green Sl *Clay* (MCK).

**Black-necked Stilt:** A female 13, 14 Jun at Dan Green Sl *Clay* (LAS, TLu) was the only report.

**American Avocet:** All: one 26 Jul at Coralville Res *Johnson* (BSc).

**Spotted Sandpiper:** Broods were found in *Polk* and *Wright* (JG, JB, SJD). The 62 at Saylorville Res *Polk* 24 Jul (SJD) is the highest Iowa count I am aware of.

**Solitary Sandpiper:** One 6 Jun at Colo Ponds *Story* (HZ) was late. One 24 Jun at Ames *Story* (SJD) probably was an early migrant followed by one 11 Jul at Neal Smith NWR *Jasper* (KVS). Most: 66 on 26 Jul at Bay's Branch WA *Guthrie* (SJD).

**Greater Yellowlegs:** First: one 29 Jun at Cardinal M *Winnesiek* (DK). After that, a few were found at several sites.

**Willet:** All: singles 28 Jun at Secret L *Fremont* (JLF), 15 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD), 26 Jul at Dan Green Sl *Clay* (LAS), and 30 Jul at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO).

**Lesser Yellowlegs:** Last: one 6 Jun at Colo Ponds *Story* (HZ). First: one 28 Jun at Secret L *Fremont* (JLF) and 3 on 29 Jun at Moeckley Prairie *Polk* (SJD). Most: 250 at Dan Green Sl *Clay* (MCK) and 295 at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD), both 29 Jul.

**Upland Sandpiper:** Mostly singles reported from 14 counties, mainly in the w two-thirds of Iowa (m.ob.). The only reports from the e third were in *Buchanan* (TSS) and *Iowa* (DP).



**Hudsonian Godwit:** Late migrants were one 5 Jun at Errington M *Polk* (SAS) and 2 on 7 Jun at Dan Green Sl *Clay* (LAS) [third latest].

**Ruddy Turnstone:** All: one 6 Jun at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB) and southbound adults 24, 30 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD).

**Sanderling:** All: one or 2 from 16–30 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD), 4 on 25 Jul

at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (DP), one 25 Jul at Clear Lake SP *Cerro Gordo* (RGo), and one or 2 on 25, 29 Jul at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD), more than most summers.

**Semipalmated Sandpiper:** Last: 4 on 6 Jun at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB) and one 15 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (DP). First: one 13 Jul in *Woodbury* (TLu) and 12 on 14 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD). Most: 239 on 24 Jul at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD).

**Least Sandpiper:** First: one 29 Jun at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD) and one 4 Jul near Barringer Sl *Clay* (SSP). Most: 830 on 24 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD) and 578 on 29 Jul at Red Rock Reservoir *Marion* (SJD).

**White-rumped Sandpiper:** Last: 10 at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (DP) and 59 at Dan Green Sl *Clay* (LAS), both 13 Jun. One 28 Jun at Dan Green Sl *Clay* may have been a sick straggler (LAS).

**Baird's Sandpiper:** Singles were found 15, 26 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD, JB).

**Pectoral Sandpiper:** Last: one 15 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (DP). First south-bound: 59 on 14 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (JG). High counts were 1,048 on 25 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* and 1,876 on 29 Jul at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD).

**Dunlin:** The 44 on 4 Jun at Cardinal M *Winneshiek* (DC), 104 on 6 Jun at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB) and 50 on 13 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (DP) were large groups for early June. The last spring birds were 15 on 15 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (DP) [ties second latest]. The only southbound bird was an ad 25 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD).

**Stilt Sandpiper:** Singles 12 Jul at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (SJD) and 14 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (JG) were early. Most: 84 at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD) and 45 at Dan Green Sl *Clay* (MCK), both 29 Jul.

**Buff-breasted Sandpiper:** All: singles on 27, 30 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD) and 29 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (DP).

**Short-billed Dowitcher:** One 13 Jul in *Woodbury* (TLu) was the first, and 18 on 14 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (JG) were the most.

**Wilson's Snipe:** All: singles 17 Jun at Panicum Prairie *Worth* (SSP), 17 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (DP), and 28 Jul at Dan Green Sl *Clay* (MPR). The June bird may have been breeding.

**American Woodcock:** All: singles 21 Jun at Pilot Knob SP *Hancock* (PH), 2 Jul in *Decatur* (ZM), and a brood near Graettinger *Palo Alto* (SSP).

**Wilson's Phalarope:** All: a juv 16, 25 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD), 3 on 19 Jul (LAS), one 28 Jul (MPR), and a juv 29 Jul (MCK), all at Dan Green Sl *Clay*, and 2 on 25 Jul at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD).

**Red-necked Phalarope:** All: an ad 25 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD) [third earliest].

**Black-headed Gull:** An ad 21, 25 Jul on the n end of Spirit L *Dickinson* (ETH), presumably was the same bird as in previous years.

**Franklin's Gull:** As many as 37 were found in June through mid July in *Buena Vista*, *Cerro Gordo*, *Dickinson*, *Hamilton*, *Johnson*, and *Polk* (m.ob.), typical of summering birds. The 300 near Lower Gar L *Dickinson* (MCK) and 250 at Jemmerston Sl *Dickinson* (SJD), both 29 Jul, indicated the arrival of south-bound birds.

**Ring-billed Gull:** Iowa's only nesting colony at Meinking M *Dickinson* was active with many nests with yg noted 26, 27 Jun (SJD, DCH). The 114 at Pool 19 *Lee* 7 Jul (SJD) may have been summering birds but 132 on 17 Jul at Pool 11 *Dubuque* (SJD) were probably migrants. The 1,189 on 25 Jul at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD) was a high count for summer.

**Herring Gull:** All: a worn first-year bird 6, 13 Jun at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB,



JG), one 13 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (DP), and an ad 17 Jul at Pool 11 *Dubuque* (SJD).

**Least Tern:** All: 7 on 28 Jun at the MidAmerican Ponds *Pottawattamie* (JLF), 4 there 8 Jul (MPr), and an ad 15 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD).

**Caspian Tern:** Up to 10 were found from 13 Jun–17 Jul in *Appanoose*, *Buena Vista*, *Dubuque*, *Johnson*, *Kossuth*, *Polk*, *Poweshiek*, *Story*, and *Warren* (m.ob.). Presumably these are nonbreeders or birds whose nests failed.

**Black Tern:** Late migrants included 50 on 9 Jun at Muskrat Sl *Jones* (CRE) and 9 on 13 Jun at Chichaqua A *Polk* (DTh). The only reports of nesting were 2 nests each 26 Jun at Meinking M and 27 Jun at Spring Run WA, both in *Dickinson* (SJD), and one 10 Jun, 1 Jul at Myre Sl *Winnebago* (SSP). By mid-July migration was evident with one 13 Jul at Table Marsh WMA *Woodbury* (TLu), 53 on 16 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD), and 100 on 29 Jul at Jemmerson Sl *Dickinson* (MCK).

**Common Tern:** All: 3 on 13 Jun at Saylorville Res *Polk* (JG).

**Forster's Tern:** Late migrants included 2 each 7 Jun at Union Slough NWR *Kossuth* (MCK) and 13 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (DP). A few were seen in n-cen Iowa during the nesting season such as one at Myre Sl *Winnebago* (SSP) but no one verified nesting. The 51 at Red Rock Res *Marion* 25 Jul (SJD) indicated fall migration was underway.

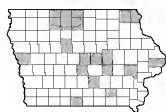
**Eurasian Collared-Dove:** Collared-Doves continue to be found in additional counties with *Fayette* (JG) and *Lyon* (SJD) added this summer. By my count, they have been found in 96 of Iowa's 99 counties. Nesting was noted at Plainfield *Bremer* (SSP) and Nevada *Story* (HZ).

**White-winged Dove:** All: one in Adel

*Dallas* from 5 Jun–30 Jul (TLa). I heard of three other birds this summer, but have no details.

**Yellow-billed Cuckoo:** Up to 5 were found in 11 counties in all except nw Iowa. Probably underreported, this species still seems to be more common than Black-billed Cuckoo.

**Black-billed Cuckoo:** Reported from 19 counties scattered across Iowa. Most reports were of a single bird. Several observers noted that this species was difficult to find.



**Barn Owl:** Nesting birds were found in *Calhoun* (Kevin Roos fide BEh), *Carroll*, and *Lucas* and probably in *Fremont* (BEh), about typical of recent years.

**Short-eared Owl:** One seen 25, 27 Jun at Kellerton WA *Ringgold* (THo) is the first summer report since 2004.

**Chuck-will's-widow:** One calling 19 Jun near Nevada *Story* (SJD, RGo) was north of its normal range. One or 2 were calling 10, 14, 20 Jun at Whitebreast Unit *Lucas* (JG, JB, RIA, PHA, DP).

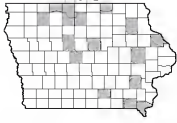
**Whip-poor-will:** Up to 5 were heard 10, 20 Jun at Whitebreast Unit *Lucas* (JG, JB, DP) but none were heard at Matsell Bridge A *Linn* (BSc), a longtime regular site for the species.

**Chimney Swift:** Counts of swifts entering a chimney roost in Algona *Kossuth* peaked at 77 on 12 Jul (MCK).

**Ruby-throated Hummingbird:** Nests were found in *Black Hawk*, *Decatur*, *Dubuque*, *Hamilton*, *Monroe*, and *Story* (SSP, ZM, HZ).

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** All: singles 1, 7 Jun and a juv 22 Jul in Pilot Knob SP *Hancock* (TLu, PH, RGo), a family group near Highlandville *Winneshiek* (DC), and several reports in *Allamakee* and *Winneshiek* (DK).

**Pileated Woodpecker:** Underreport-



ed from parts of e Iowa where it is most common, it was found in 15 counties; most reports were of one or 2 birds (m.ob.). Broods were found at Wanata SP *Clay* (LAS) and Ft. Defiance SP *Emmet* (SSP) at the nw edge of its Iowa range and at Ledges SP *Boone* (LGD). (See article in this issue.)

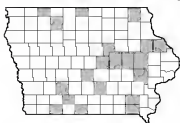
**Olive-sided Flycatcher:** Late birds included one 6 Jun at Viking Lake SP *Montgomery* (KVS), one 6 Jun at Banner Lake SP *Warren* (JSi), one 7 Jun in *Cerro Gordo* (RGo), and 2 on 9 Jun in *Winneshiek* (DK).

**Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** Most reports from n-cen Iowa with 7 on 1 Jun at Smith WA *Kossuth* (MCK). Last: 2 each 7 Jun at Pilot Knob SP *Hancock* (PH) and *Algona Kossuth* (MCK).

**Acadian Flycatcher:** Reported from 17 counties, mostly in the e half of Iowa. Singles 18 Jun at Wanata SP *Clay* (SJD) and 11 Jul at Loess Hills WA *Monona* (TLu) were the westernmost birds. The high count was 29 on 12 Jun at Brinton Timber *Washington* (CJE). Nests or broods were found in *Delaware* and *Dubuque* (SSP).

**Alder Flycatcher:** Ten on 1 Jun at Smith WA *Kossuth* (MCK) and 11 on 7 Jun at Pilot Knob SP *Hancock* (PH) were high counts for early June. Late migrants were singles 12 Jun at *Algona Kossuth* (MCK) and 23 Jun in *Hancock* (RGo) [record latest]. One first seen 29 Jun in *Dallas* (SJD) was later determined to be nesting, a first for Iowa (see note in this issue).

**Willow Flycatcher:** Up to 7 were found in 20 counties covering much of the state south to *Decatur*, *Taylor*, and *Van Buren* on the Missouri border (m.ob.).



**Least Flycatcher:** Singles from 1–9

Jun in *Hancock*, *Kossuth*, and *Winneshiek* (JB, MCK, DK) were probably late migrants. One singing 26 Jun at Bradgate A *Humboldt* (SJD) was suggestive of breeding. Singles 18 Jul near Jester P *Polk* (CGr), 26 Jun in *Emmet* (SSP), 28 Jul in *Algona Kossuth* (MCK) and 29 Jul at Wentlands Woods *Floyd* (SSP) may have been nesting birds or early fall migrants.

**Western Kingbird:** Besides reports from *Fremont* (MPr) and *Woodbury* (TLu) in w Iowa, singles 3 Jun in *Decatur* (JRL) and 13 Jul in Coon Rapids *Carroll* (RTh) were somewhat east of its expected range. Other reports were from cen Iowa: 3 pairs throughout the summer at the State Capitol (AB) and a pair attending a nest 5 Jul in West Des Moines *Polk* (RLC).

**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher:** One 24 Jun at Green Valley L *Union* (Jacob Newton fide SJD) was the first summer record since 2006.

**Loggerhead Shrike:** As in 2008, most reports were from w half of Iowa. Up to 4 were reported in 12 counties with broods in *Adams* and *Fremont* (KVS). The number of counties with reports has declined from 21 in 2005 to 15 in 2007 and 18 last year.



**White-eyed Vireo:** Three 22 Jun at Croton Unit *Lee* (CRE) were the most. Elsewhere singles were in *Polk* and *Warren* 14 Jun (JSi), 1, 19 Jul at Pleasant Creek RA *Linn* (BSc, SJD), Donnellson Unit *Lee* 7 Jul (SJD), and 17 Jul in *Polk* (DK). One at MidAmerican Ponds *Pottawattamie* 28 Jun (JLF) was west of where it is usually found.

**Bell's Vireo:** With reports from 20 counties (m.ob.), only those from *Buena Vista*, *Plymouth* and *Winneshiek* were in the n third of Iowa, a pattern similar to that found in



2008. The most was an estimated 15 singing males at Neal Smith NWR *Jasper* (KVS).

**Yellow-throated Vireo:** A few were found in 16 counties (m.ob.). The only broods reported were near Turtle Creek P *Delaware* (SSP) and at Ingham-High Lake A *Emmet* (SSP).

**Red-eyed Vireo:** Underreported but with 14 found each at Dolliver SP *Webster* and Eldon WA *Davis* (SJD), this species clearly is common in wooded areas throughout Iowa.

**Back-billed Magpie:** Three plus a nest were at Broken Kettle Grasslands *Plymouth* 11 Jun (GLV).

**Purple Martin:** The biggest post-breeding flock reported was 50 on 25 Jul at Jester P *Polk* (JB).

**Tree Swallow:** Large flocks included 5,040 on 25 Jul at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD) and 880 on 26 Jul in *Greene* (SJD).

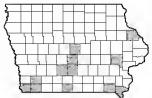
**Bank Swallow:** A post-breeding flock of 620 was at Red Rock Res *Marion* 29 Jul (SJD).

**Cliff Swallow:** Post-breeding concentrations included 2,020 at Red Rock Res *Marion* and 1,455 at Saylorville Res *Polk*, both 25 Jul (SJD).

**Tufted Titmouse:** Broods were found in *Delaware*, *Dubuque*, *Polk*, and *Warren* (SSP, JB), all in its usual range.

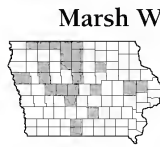
**Red-breasted Nuthatch:** All: one on 26 Jul near Fort Dodge *Webster* (TJ) could have been an early migrant or nesting.

**Carolina Wren:** Up to 7 were reported in 12 counties, mostly in the s half of Iowa (m.ob.) but north to *Dubuque* (SSP). Broods were found in *Madison*, *Polk*, and *Story* (SJD, BE, HZ).



**BEWICK'S WREN:** One was at the junkyard near Argyle *Lee* 6, 20 Jun, 7 Jul (JG, DP, SJD).

**Sedge Wren:** Reported from 17 counties, mostly in the n two-thirds of Iowa (m.ob.). However, reports from *Decatur* (NM, ZM) and *Page* (KVS) extend its range to the Missouri border. Reports of 20 in *Floyd* (SJD) and 15 singing at night at Neal Smith NWR *Jasper* (KVS) indicate how abundant this secretive species can be. A nest was found in *Kossuth* and a brood in *Palo Alto* (SSP).



**Marsh Wren:** Reported from 23 counties; one or 2 on 3, 27 Jul at Lamoni *Decatur* (SJD, ZM) were near the Missouri border where it is uncommon.

An estimated 50 on 27 Jun at Eagle L *Hancock* (PH) indicates its potential abundance in good habitat.

**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** Broods in *Emmet* (2 sites), *Floyd*, and *Worth* (SSP) were at the edge of its usual Iowa range.

**Veery:** Reported from 8 counties with many reports from *Hancock* and *Kossuth*, somewhat west of its usual strongholds (m.ob.). High counts were 12 at Pilot Knob SP *Hancock* (CJF) and 10 at Backbone SP *Delaware* (SSP). Nesting was confirmed at Backbone SP *Delaware* and White Pine *Hol-low Dubuque* (SSP).

**Swainson's Thrush:** All: single late migrants 1 Jun at Smith WA *Kossuth* and 3 Jun in *Algona Kossuth* (MCK).

**Wood Thrush:** Up to 6 were found in 19 counties, mainly in the se half of Iowa (m.ob.). Birds at Fort Defiance SP *Emmet* (SSP) and *Wanata SP Clay* (LAS) were at the limits of its Iowa range. A brood was found in *Story* (HZ).

**Northern Mockingbird:** The only reports were from *Decatur*, *Guthrie*, *Iowa*, and *Montgomery* (NM, JRL, DTh, CJC, SJD), all in its usual range.

**Blue-winged Warbler:** Up to 4 were found in *Allamakee*, *Hardin*, *Johnson*, *Jones*,

and *Lee* (CRE, MPr, SSP, JG), fewer than most summers.

**Tennessee Warbler:** All: singles 2 Jun in *Ackley Hardin* (MPr) and 6 Jun near *Argyle Lee* (JG).

**Nashville Warbler:** One 1 Jun at Pilot Knob SP *Hancock* (JB) was late while singles 27 Jul in *Ames Story* (CGr) [third earliest] and 31 Jul in *Jack Creek Twp Emmet* (SSP) were early.

**Northern Parula:** From 1–5 were found in 15 counties, mostly in the se half of Iowa (m.ob.). An ad was found feeding a fledgling in *Ames Story* (CGr).

**Chestnut-sided Warbler:** Singles 1 Jun at *Smith WA Kossuth* (MCK) and 3 Jun in *Decatur* (ZM) were probably late migrants, but the status of a male 18 Jun at *West Des Moines Polk* (D. Stilwell) and 1 on 18 Jul near *Jester P Polk* (CGr) is more debatable. Four on 10 Jun at *Yellow River F Allamakee* (DK) and 1 singing 1 Jul near *Kendallville Winneshiek* (DC) were within its nesting range.

**Black-throated Green Warbler:** All: a late migrant 3 Jun in *Liscomb Hardin* (MPr)

and one 3 Jul in *Urbandale Polk* (BE) that was late, early, or lost.

**Blackburnian Warbler:** A male 7 Jun at Pilot Knob SP *Hancock* (PH) was late [third latest].

**Yellow-throated Warbler:** One or 2 were found in five counties, mainly in se Iowa (CRE, SSP, MPr).

**Pine Warbler:** One was singing 6, 20 Jun, 7 Jul at the *Donnellson Unit Lee* (JG, DP, SJD) where this species was found in the summer of 2007 and nested in 2004.

**Cerulean Warbler:** Reported from 10 counties, mostly in the e half of Iowa but including one 2 Jun in *Stone SP Woodbury* (TLu). Nesting was noted at *Thousand Acre Unit Monroe* (SSP).

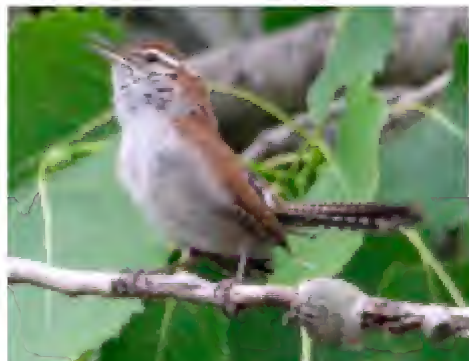
**Black-and-white Warbler:** All: singles 22 Jun, 7 Jul at *Croton Unit Lee* (CRE, SJD) and 3 Jul at *Lake Ahquabi SP Warren* (JSi) may have been nesting.

**American Redstart:** A few were reported from 14 counties, mostly in e and cen Iowa. However, 1 at *Croton Unit Lee* (SJD) was considered a good find for that warbler-rich area. Broods were found in *Delaware, Jones, Palo Alto, and Webster* (SSP).

**Prothonotary Warbler:** Up to 3 in



*Sedge Wren*, *Thorpe Park*, *Winnebago*, 7 July 2009. Photograph by John Bissell, Grimes, IA.



*Bewick's Wren*, *junkyard near Argyle, Lee*, 6 June 2009. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.



*Black Hawk, Buchanan, Dallas, Hardin, Humboldt, Iowa, and Wright* (SSP, JSi, MPr, SJD, CRE) and a brood 26 Jun at Martin WA *Pocahontas* (SJD) were along the fringes of its usual Iowa range. One singing 17 Jun at Stone SP *Woodbury* (TLu) was unexpected.

**Worm-eating Warbler:** Other than one 7 Jul at Farmington Unit *Van Buren* (SJD), all reports were in *Lee*: one or 2 on 6 Jun-7 Jul at Croton Unit (JG, DP, CRE, SJD), one 7 Jul at the Lick Creek Unit, and 2 on 7 Jul at the Donnellson Unit (SJD).

**Ovenbird:** Reported in 14 counties covering all but far nw Iowa (m.ob.). As many as 24 adults were found in Thousand Acre Unit *Monroe* where a brood was found (SSP). Broods also were found at the Croton Unit *Lee* (SJD), near Turtle Creek P *Delaware* (SSP), and in *Delaware* (SJD).

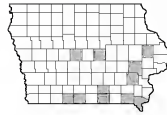
**Northern Waterthrush:** Late migrants were 2 Jun at Pine Lake SP *Hardin* (MPr), 3, 15 Jun at Eagle L *Hancock* (RGo), and 7 Jun at Pilot Knob SP *Hancock* (PH).



*Grasshopper Sparrow, rural Van Buren, 6 June 2009. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.*

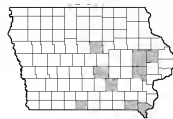
**Louisiana Waterthrush:** A few were found in 11 counties mostly in e Iowa (m.ob.). One 2 Jun at Stone SP *Woodbury* (TLu) was the westernmost report. A brood was found at Backbone SP *Delaware* (SSP).

**Kentucky Warbler:** Up to 6 were found in 11 counties mostly in the se quarter of Iowa (m.ob.). Broods were found at the Croton and Lick Creek Units *Lee* (SJD), Indian Bluffs WMA *Jones* (SSP), and Pictured Rock P *Jones* (SJD), and a nest was in *Decatur* (ZM).



**Mourning Warbler:** The usual early June late migrants were found starting with 4 on 1 Jun at Smith WA *Kossuth* (MCK). Singles 7 Jun in *Algona* *Kossuth* (MCK) and Pilot Knob SP *Hancock* (PH) were the last birds.

**Hooded Warbler:** Up to 4 were found in six counties with reports north to Pilot Knob SP *Hancock* (TLu, JB, PH) and A.A. Call SP *Kossuth* (MCK). A brood was found at Donnellson Unit *Lee* (SJD).



**Yellow-breasted Chat:** Up to 3 were found in 9 counties (m.ob.), mainly in se Iowa.

**Eastern Towhee:** Birds were reported from only six counties with 12 on 23 Jul at Elk Grove WA *Guthrie* (DTh) the most. Broods were found in *Delaware, Floyd, and Hamilton* (SSP).

**Clay-colored Sparrow:** All: broods were found 3 Jul at Cayler Prairie *Dickinson* (AB) and 18 Jul in Danville Twp *Worth* (SSP). Singing males were noted near the Cedar R *Mitchell* (RGo), at Kettleson Hogsback A *Dickinson* (DCH), Union Slough NWR *Kossuth* (MCK), and at 4 sites in *Winnebago* (SSP). All reports were from Iowa's northern border counties.

**Lark Sparrow:** Found in 15 counties, mainly in the cen third of the state (m.ob.).





*Osprey young in nest, Jester Park, Polk, 15 July 2009. Photograph by Jim Moreland, Boone, IA.*



*Osprey adult taking off from limb at Jester Park, Polk, 23 July 2009. Photograph by Jim Moreland, Boone, IA.*



*Virginia Rail chick, Snake Creek Marsh, Greene, 5 July 2009. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*



*Cooper's Hawk juvenile with prey, Johnson, 26 June 2009. Photograph by Joe Dixon, Iowa City, IA.*



*Henslow's Sparrow, Pleasant Creek Recreation Area, Linn, 19 July 2009. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*



*Yellow-breasted Chat, near Croton Unit of Shimek State Forest, Lee, 11 July 2009. Photograph by Reid Allen, West Des Moines, IA.*



*Western Kingbird, The Capitol, Des Moines, Polk, 7 June 2009. Photograph by Reid Allen, West Des Moines, IA.*



*Upland Sandpiper, rural Pocahontas, 26 July 2009. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.*

Two reporters (DTh, SJD) noted that this species seemed to be common this summer.

**Savannah Sparrow:** A singing male 29 Jul at Pinchey Bottoms *Marion* (SJD) was a bit south of its usual range.

**Grasshopper Sparrow:** Most: an estimated 30 males were at Neal Smith NWR *Jasper* (KVS). Up to 8 were found in 13 other counties (m.ob.).

**Henslow's Sparrow:** Reported from 29 counties, mostly in s Iowa but extending north to the Minnesota border (m.ob.). This species continues to amaze with the numerous reports now better defining its summer range. With an estimated 50 males at Neal Smith NWR *Jasper* (KVS), the species is clearly much more common than was thought just a few years ago.

**Swamp Sparrow:** Largely confined to the n half of Iowa, 56 were detected 23 Jul near *Prairie Gold WA Palo Alto* (SSP). Broods were found in *Emmet, Kossuth, Palo Alto, Winnebago, and Worth* (SSP).

**White-throated Sparrow:** All: a female 8 Jul at *Thorpe P Winnebago* (Lisa Rallls) was the third summer report in the last 4 years.

**Summer Tanager:** One or 2 were found in 11 counties, mostly in s Iowa; 2 in *Woodbury* (TLu) were the furthest north (m.ob.). A nest was found in *Guthrie* (Austin Lambert fide SJD).

**Scarlet Tanager:** Reported from 20 counties with high counts of 18 in *Lee* (SJD) and 12 at *Thousand Acre Unit Monroe* (SSP). Broods were found in *Delaware, Hamilton, Jones, Madison, Monroe, and Webster* (SSP, SJD).

**Blue Grosbeak:** Besides 1–3 in *Fremont, Monona, and Woodbury* (GLV, TLu, MPr) where it is expected, singles were further east along the edge of its range at *Cayler*

*Prairie Dickinson* (DCH), in *Cherokee* (GLV), at *Raccoon River WA Calhoun* (SJD), and *Ringgold WA Ringgold* (THo). More surprising were singles 18 Jul in *Appanoose* (RLC) and 7 Jul near *Montrose Lee* (SJD), the first summer reports from se Iowa since 2006, and a pair 4 Jun in *Black Hawk* (SSP).

**Dickcissel:** Few specific comments but most suggested that it continues to do well.

**Bobolink:** Few mentioned this species, and presumably it continues to do well. Reports from *Page* and *Fremont* (KVS) indicate it is found south to the Missouri border.

**Western Meadowlark:** Two on 23 Jul were at the *Seven Cities Sod farm near Davenport Scott* (WMZ), their usual e Iowa outpost.

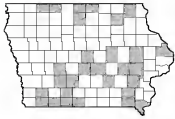
**Yellow-headed Blackbird:** Yellow-headed appeared to be nesting at *Lewis Bottoms Rd Linn* (BSc, SJD), apparently a new site.

**Great-tailed Grackle:** Reported only from *Decatur, Hamilton, Polk, and Sac* (SJD, MAC). A fledgling at *Gordon's M Hamilton* seemed to be at a new nesting site (SJD).

**Brown-headed Cowbird:** Reports of cowbirds parasitizing *Baltimore Oriole*, a species that normally rejects cowbird eggs from its nests, came from *Kossuth* (MCK) and *Palo Alto* (SSP). Elsewhere cowbirds were reported parasitizing *Red-eyed Vireo* in *Emmet, Hamilton, Palo Alto, and Pocahontas*; *Yellow-throated Vireo* in *Delaware* and *Emmet*; *Scarlet Tanager* in *Monroe*; *Song Sparrow* in *Palo Alto*; and *Northern Cardinal* in *Dubuque* (all SSP).

**Orchard Oriole:** One or 2 were found in 21 counties scattered across much of Iowa (m.ob.). Nests were found in *Delaware, Kossuth, Palo Alto, Winnebago, and Wright* (SSP).

**Pine Siskin:** One or 2 were found through June and July in *Algona Kossuth*



(MCK), near Badger Creek RA *Madison* (DTh), Ames *Story* (SJD), Big Creek L *Polk* (SJD), West Des Moines *Polk* (SAS), near Banner Lake SP *Warren* (JSi), and Nevada

*Story* (HZ). Presumably holdovers from the numerous nesting birds reported this spring (Kenne 2009), no evidence of nesting was mentioned this summer.

## COMMENT

As always, this article depends on reports from observers throughout Iowa. This summer, I received about 1,650 reports from 59 contributors, above average but down a bit from the past few summers. I thank each of you for reporting your sightings. Although it is not possible to individually cite each report, collectively they are all important as I write this report. I thank you all for your continuing help.

Our understanding of the relationships among various groups of birds continues to change. Those of you searching for tanagers in this report will note that they have been moved from just after the warblers to after the sparrows. The latest word is that some of the "tanagers," including Summer and Scarlet tanager, really belong with the Northern Cardinal, grosbeaks, and buntings in the family Cardinalidae, hence the move. Stay tuned for further changes.

## CONTRIBUTORS

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Pam H. Allen	PHA	W Des Moines	Tyler Harms	TH	Ames
Reid I. Allen	RIA	W Des Moines	Doug C. Harr	DCH	Ogden
Ron Andrews	RA	Clear Lake	Paul Hertz	PH	Mason City
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Matthew Baughman	MB	Robins	Tom Johnson	TJ	Mystic
Paula Bergstrom	PB	Marengo	Matt C. Kenne	MCK	Algona
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Wayne Buchholtz	WB	Dubuque	Tucker Lutter	TLu	Bronson
Mark A. Carson	MAC	Cambridge	Nathan Miller	NM	Davis City
Dennis Carter	DC	Decorah	Zach Miller	ZM	Davis City
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Rita Goranson	RGo	Mason City	Ed Thelen	ETH	Spirit Lake
Cory Gregory	CGr	Ames	Rob Thelen	RTh	Carroll

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*Indigo Bunting, Saylorville Reservoir, Polk, 24 July 2009. Photograph by John Bissell, Grimes, IA.*



*American Goldfinch, Saylorville Reservoir, Polk, 24 July 2009. Photograph by John Bissell, Grimes, IA.*

*Prothonotary Warbler  
hovering at nest and feeding  
young, Beaver Bottoms Wet-  
land, Dallas, 1 July 2009.  
Photograph by Ty Smedes,  
Urbandale, IA.*



#### CONTRIBUTORS, continued

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Dennis Thompson	DTh	Johnston	Charles L. Winterwood	CLW	Dubuque
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Kenne, M. C. 2009. Field reports—spring 2009. *Iowa Bird Life* 79:136–159, 162–174.

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*Red-headed Woodpecker, rural Forest City, Winnebago, 3 July 2009. Photograph by John Bissell, Grimes, IA.*



*Male Summer Tanager, Maffitt Reservoir, Polk, 28 June 2009. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.*



*Lark Sparrow, rural Van Buren, 6 June 2009. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.*



*Dickcissel at landfill, Boone, 12 June 2009. Photograph by Jim Moreland, Boone, IA.*

# Alder Flycatcher Nesting in Dallas County: First Nesting Record for Iowa

Stephen J. Dinsmore

On 29 June 2009, I was doing Breeding Bird Atlas work at the Saylorville Wildlife Area in northeastern Dallas County. At approximately 6:45 A.M., I stopped to listen at a wet grassy area that contained several thickets of gray dogwood (*Cornus racemosa*) and other shrubs. Almost immediately I heard a singing male Alder Flycatcher. The bird was easily identified by its distinctive *ree-bee-o* call and, up close, the sharp *mik* call note. The bird responded immediately to a taped call of an Alder Flycatcher, approaching to within three feet of me and allowing close-up photos.

Recognizing that nesting was possible, I returned several times to follow up on the sighting. On 8 July, the male was still present, but not singing, and responded instantly to a taped playback (Figure 1). The bird seemed to favor a large patch of dogwoods where I had first seen it. On 14 July, I discovered two adult Alder Flycatchers together, both obviously agitated by a taped playback. (See back cover photo.) The male did not sing, and the presumed female soon disappeared into the dogwood patch. Thinking that nesting was a real possibility, I returned two days later (16 July) to search the dogwood patch for a nest. After a few minutes of searching I found a small cup nest approximately 2 m off the ground near the top of a gray dogwood (Figure 2). When I reached up to check the contents, I flushed an *Empidonax* that quickly disappeared into the thick shrubbery. The nest was empty. Within seconds, there were two agitated Alder Flycatchers within 3 m of me, identified by call notes. I initially assumed that I flushed an adult from an empty nest, but now believe I actually forced a juvenile from the nest as it was ready to fledge. On 24 July, a single adult was still present. On 5 August, I arrived in mid-morning and assumed I would not find anything. However, as I exited the car I heard



Figure 1. Alder Flycatcher parent, Saylorville Wildlife Area, Dallas, 8 July 2009. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.



Figure 2. Alder Flycatcher nest, Saylorville Wildlife Area, Dallas, 16 July 2009. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.

the male singing vigorously from a nearby dogwood thicket. I approached and soon found three birds, two of them adults and a third that appeared to be a juvenile. I was also able to obtain detailed audio recordings of the male singing.

This represents the first confirmed nesting record for Alder Flycatcher in Iowa and a significant range expansion south from known nesting areas in Minnesota and Wisconsin. This was not a bird I expected to find nesting in central Iowa, although there are numerous summer reports from Iowa. Most are in June and are presumed late migrants, although this nesting record raises the possibility of similar future reports.

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## Lazuli Bunting in Polk County

*Michael Cigelman*



*Figure 1. Lazuli Bunting, Cigelman Des Moines yard, Polk, 5 May 2009. Photograph by Reid Allen, West Des Moines, IA.*

On 5 May 2009, I looked out at my feeder that is located behind our home next to the woods. The time was between 5:05 and 5:10 P.M. I noticed a lone bird on the ground below the feeder. The blue of its head caught my eye. One of the first things I noticed about the bird was the white wing-bars. I also saw that it was blue and gray on its back and that it had a bluish tail. It had dark areas around its eyes and a creamy rust-colored underside. I have had Indigo Buntings before and am familiar with Eastern Bluebirds. This bird didn't look like either.

The bird was feeding on the ground by

itself. There were no other birds around. It stayed on the ground for several minutes.

I called my friends, Reid and Pam Allen, and they had me describe the bird, and Pam mentioned a couple of birds to look at in my guide. While talking to Pam, I noticed the white area on its abdomen. She had me look at the Lazuli Bunting in my bird book and I told her that was what I thought it was. Pam told me they were coming over to look at the bird. Pam and Reid waited and watched the feeder area from their car and I watched out of my back window. After about a half hour, one of the many wild turkeys that comes to my feeder stopped by. I was afraid that the turkey might keep the bunting from returning, so

I stood next to our patio door and scared it off. Several minutes later the bunting returned briefly and left. About ten minutes after that, the bunting returned and started feeding on the ground again. Reid and Pam were able to get a good look at the bird and confirmed that it was a Lazuli Bunting, and Reid took several pictures (Figure 1),

The Lazuli Bunting was last seen by my wife, Susan, at 7:00 P.M. on 7 May 2009.

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## Mottled Ducks at Saylorville Reservoir

*Stephen J. Dinsmore*

On 8 July 2009 I was birding the north end of Saylorville Reservoir in Polk County in search of waterbirds attracted to the recently exposed mudflats. On the extensive shallow mudflats opposite the lower end of Jester Park, I noticed a distinctly darker *Anas* duck feeding with several Mallards. The bird's dark body, distinctly pale buff head, and dull yellow-green bill caught my eye and I suspected the bird was a Mottled Duck. I was able to study the bird at leisure between 9:47 and 10:50 A.M. and concluded that it was indeed a Mottled Duck (Figure 1). The bird was barely smaller and slimmer-necked than surrounding Mallards, which it otherwise resembled in shape and structure. The bill was a dull yellow-green color, very similar to that of a male Mallard. The head and upper neck were mostly a pale buff color and were sharply separated from the darker lower neck. The bird had a narrow dark eyeline and a dark crown. The small dark gape spot was clearly evident at the base of the bill. The eye appeared dark. I looked for but did not see any evidence of streaking on the throat—this feature was evident on some of the nearby Mallards. The body, from mid-neck to the rump, was an even warm brown color. Upon careful inspection, the feathers on the flanks and the scapulars were broadly edged in buff. The legs were bright orange. I only briefly glimpsed the rectrices and speculum when the bird preened. I saw no white in the rectrices. The speculum was an iridescent dark blue-green color in bright light. I saw no evidence of even a faint white border to the speculum, either in life or later from photos. In flight, the bird's gleaming white axillars and underwing coverts contrasted starkly with the dark belly. On the basis of bill color and brightness of the legs I concluded the bird was probably a male Mottled Duck.

Later, I looked for but did not see a Mottled Duck at this location on 12 visits until a single bird reappeared on 1 August. Then, on 4–5 August, I observed an apparent pair of Mottled Ducks at this locale (Figure 2). Both birds remained together at all times, often flying the length of the flats side by side, and one bird (the male) showed occasional aggression towards Mallards. All of this led me to believe they had formed a pair-bond. Both birds had nearly identical plumage, except that one bird (probably the female) had a duller





Figure 1. Mottled Duck, Saylorville Reservoir, Polk, 4 August 2009. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.



Figure 2. Mottled Ducks, Saylorville Reservoir, Polk, 4 August 2009. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.

greenish-yellow bill, legs that were a duller orange color, and appeared subtly paler overall. I was able to carefully study the speculum and rectrices of both birds at fairly close range and again noted a complete lack of white color. Although we'll never know for certain, I believe it is possible that there were three different Mottled Ducks at Saylorville. I'm certain that two birds were not present until early August. Two scenarios could explain the pair—a female appeared sometime in early August and immediately paired with the male present since July, or a pair appeared together and the initial male disappeared at almost the same time. Pair formation in Mottled Ducks is among the earliest in waterfowl and begins in August (Moorman and Gray 1994), so this observation is not unusual and differed from nearby Mallards that were all unpaired.

I carefully considered the possibility that the birds were American Black Ducks or a hybrid with a Mallard parent. The combination of dull yellow-green bill color, dark blue-green speculum, lack of a white border to the speculum, lack of white in the rectrices, dark body plumage with contrasting buffy head, dark gape spot, unstreaked throat, and other subtle plumage features eliminate the possibility of a Mallard of either sex. An American Black Duck was eliminated on the basis of speculum color, the distinct buffy tones to the head and body plumage, presence of a dark gape spot, lack of streaking on the throat, and lack of white bordering the speculum. A hybrid, especially Mallard x American Black Duck, is also a possibility, but the lack of a white border to the speculum and no white in the rectrices are features that most authorities consider sufficient to eliminate this option.

This represents the second record of a Mottled Duck in Iowa. The first was a single bird at this same locale from 7–8 July 2006 (Dinsmore and Brees 2007). There has been a spike in records of this species from the Midwest, including recent reports in Illinois, Indiana, and Missouri.

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# Neotropic Cormorant in Wright County

Stephen J. Dinsmore



Figure 1. Neotropic Cormorant, left, and Double-crested Cormorant, right, Elm Lake, Wright, 5 July 2009. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.

On 5 July 2009 I arrived at the southeast access at Elm Lake and noted a few Double-crested Cormorants feeding at the south end of the lake. As I was about to leave at 11:05 A.M., I spotted >20 cormorants roosting in trees along the west shore of the lake opposite my position. I scanned them looking for a small cormorant and repeatedly returned to one bird that seemed smaller, but was partially obscured by branches. Eventually, this bird flew down to the water, fed alone for several minutes, and then returned to the tree. Although the bird was distant, I was convinced it was a Neotropic Cormorant on the basis of

size and shape and decided to hike in from the west side of the lake for a closer look. By 11:45 A.M. I was standing almost underneath the bird on the west shore of the lake, where I immediately confirmed that it was indeed a Neotropic Cormorant (Figure 1).

I studied the bird at fairly close range as it perched in a tree next to a Double-crested Cormorant. I estimated the bird was 25% shorter than a Double-crested Cormorant, but proportioned differently with a longer tail and smaller head and bill. In direct comparison, the tail was the same length as that of a double-crested, although I noted that the rectrices were heavily worn and at least one central rectrix was broken. The bill was dark gray, slightly shorter and slimmer than that of a double-crested, and lacked a strong hook at the tip. The gular pouch was dull orange with a thin line of white feathers along the rear border that came to a sharp point just below and behind the eye. The small head had a gently rounded forehead and lacked a peaked crown like a double-crested. The head, neck, body, wings, and tail were a dull black color and lacked the brown tones of nearby immature Double-crested Cormorants. The bird also lacked the characteristic pale upper breast of an immature Double-crested Cormorant. The legs and feet were dark-colored. I concluded

that the bird was a subadult on the basis of the plumage, especially the incomplete white border to the gular pouch and lack of a darker, more glossy body plumage.

This represents the fifth record of a Neotropic Cormorant for Iowa. Previous records occurred in early May (2), June (1), and November (1), and the late spring and early summer vagrancy pattern to the Midwest suggests that it is worth carefully checking all summer cormorants for this species.

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## Birding Black Hawk County

*Tom Schilke*

After returning from an annual visit to Billings, Montana to see my brother, and of course check the local hot spots for birds, I got to thinking. If the tables were turned and someone was visiting Waterloo/Cedar Falls and Black Hawk County for a few days, where would one go to find the best birding habitat? We don't have Montana prairie dog towns and mountains in Black Hawk County, but we do have quality grassland, marsh, lake, and woodland habitats attractive to eastern birds and the occasional visitor from lands afar.

Waterloo/Cedar Falls is situated basically in the center of Black Hawk County (Figure 1). Students come here to seek knowledge at the University of Northern Iowa, Hawkeye Community College, and other specialty schools. Others may come to attend a sporting event, attend a concert (the Gallagher/Bluedorn Performing Arts Center at UNI is recognized as one of the finest auditoriums in the Midwest), or to recreate at one the parks, most of which are now connected by an extensive trail system. Some prefer to shop, others bird. Good birding is close at hand to most venues. Let's go birding.

Many of the best birding and recreation areas are along the Cedar River which twists diagonally through the county from the northwest corner to the southeast corner. About seven miles northwest of Cedar Falls along the Black Hawk/Butler County line on a north-south gravel road, lies the 80 acre **Cedar Hills Sand Prairie** (Figure 1.1). Thirty-six acres is native sand prairie and home to over 360 plant species. Owned and managed by The Nature Conservancy, this unique grassland ecosystem's diverse plant and animal life is often studied by researchers. The abundance of grassland bird species is somewhat dependant on the burn management plan. Look for Henslow's and Grasshopper Sparrows, Bobolink, Sedge Wren, and the occasional Clay-colored and Lark Sparrow. A sure bet has been the annual American Woodcock spring aerial mating display beginning in late March and con-

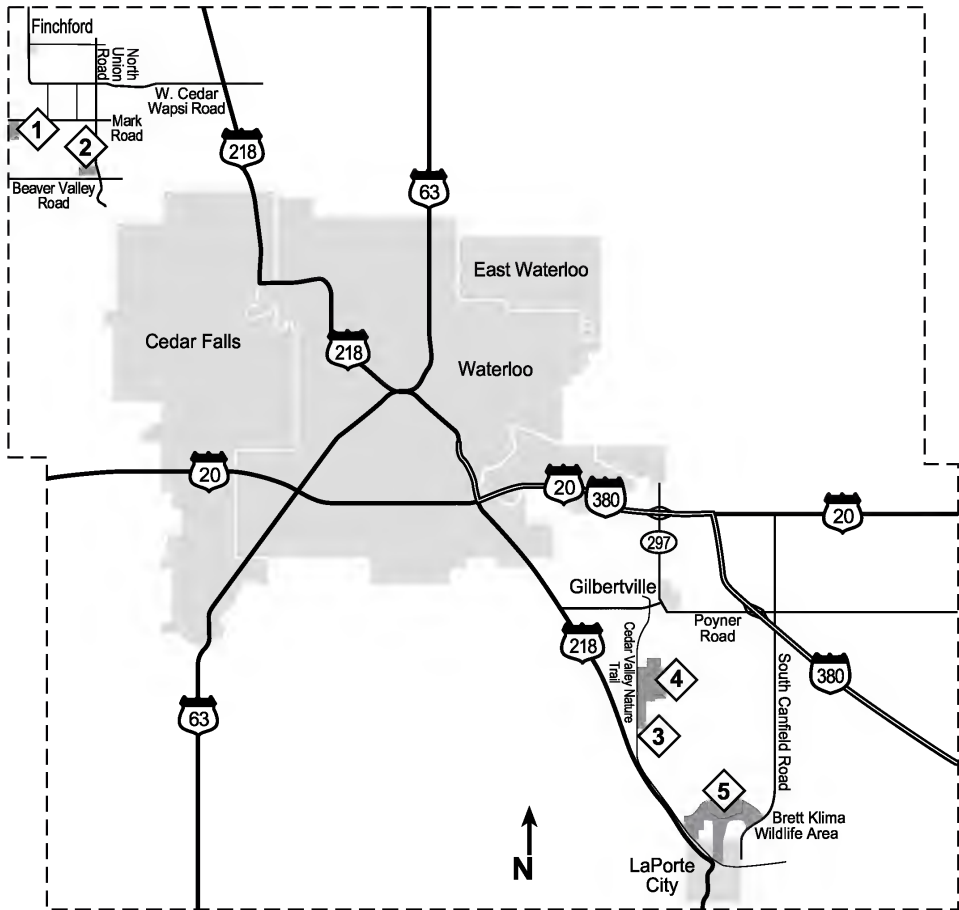


Figure 1. Birding Black Hawk County: (1.1) Cedar Hills Sand Prairie, (1.2) Beaver Valley Wetland, (1.3) Cedar Valley Nature Trail, (1.4) Cedar River Natural Resource Area, (1.5) Brett Klima Wildlife Area.

tinuing into June. Park at the gate on Butler Road, check the visitor book, and walk straight east 100 yards or so out past the single tall leaning tree. Turn and face west to watch the evening curtain drop, providing the perfect canvas to watch woodcock rise and spiral in the ebbing light. The serenade of winnowing Wilson's Snipe, peenting woodcock, whinnying Sora, Eastern Meadowlarks, the insect-like chips of Henslow's Sparrows, various frogs, and passing waterfowl is the oddest of choruses at times.

Just a couple of miles southwest on the corner of C67 and Union Road is the 63-acre **Beaver Valley Wetland** (Figure 1.2). A small gravel parking lot off C67 provides public access to a wetland complex that wraps around a small lake. A grassy, rutted road leads to a long deck and viewing platform that juts out over a piece of the wetland providing a good view of the lake and some of the surrounding shallows. I enjoy spending time here

during the morning hours, the sun to my back, scoping patches of mud for shorebirds and the lake for waterbirds. Once, during a time of low water levels, I recall observing White-rumped Sandpipers and Semipalmated Plovers plucking bloodworms from the mud only a few feet away from the deck. Passerines are found in the nearby tall trees. Eagles, Merlin, Red-shouldered Hawks, and the like may make an appearance. American Pelicans gather on the lake amid rafts of migrating waterfowl. A Brant was found here on a Christmas Bird Count a few years back.

Directly east of Beaver Valley Wetland across Union Road is a short gravel road that leads to a hidden, trashy parking lot. A yellow steel I-beam gate blocks the road past the parking lot. Here begins the 489-acre Railroad Lake area. The woodlands and brush around the lake, ponds, and backwaters are quite good for warblers. Walk the narrow path north from the parking lot along the lake and through the brush for close-up birding. The area beyond the I-beam gate and over the railroad tracks is also public. Check the edges for sparrows and Black-billed Cuckoo.

**George Wyth State Park** (Figure 2) is recognized as the crown jewel for birding and outdoor recreation in the area. The 1,100 acre park is made up of a chain of lakes and varied river bottom woodland habitats. A latticework of miles of multi-use trails allows birders excellent access to prime habitat all times of the year. The park is nestled within the Waterloo/Cedar Falls metro area, bordered by the Cedar River on the south and Hwy. 218

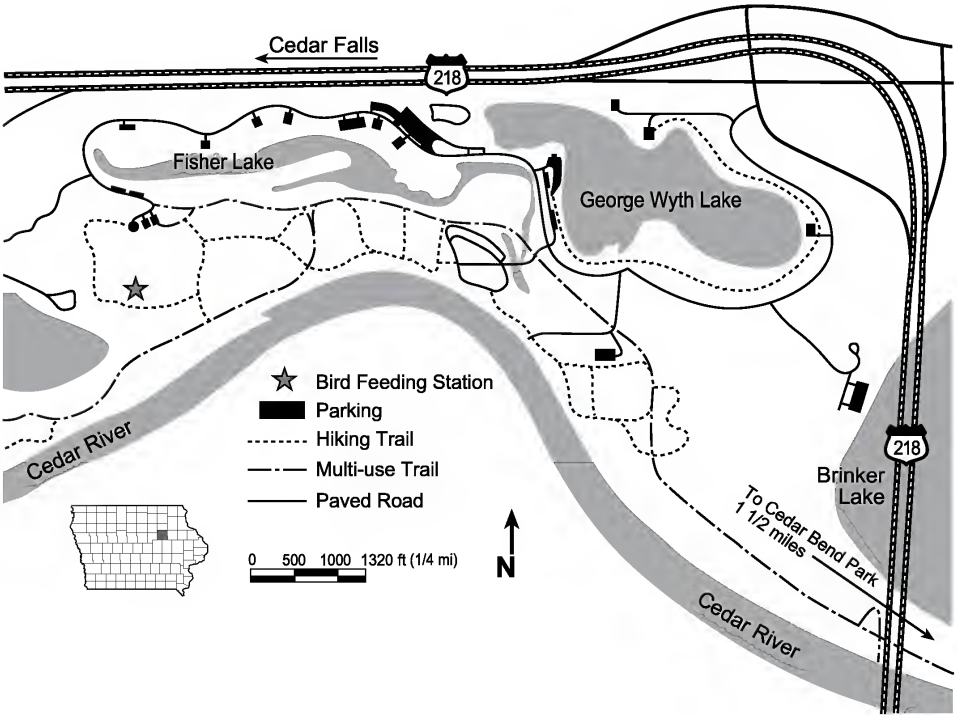


Figure 2. George Wyth State Park, Black Hawk County.

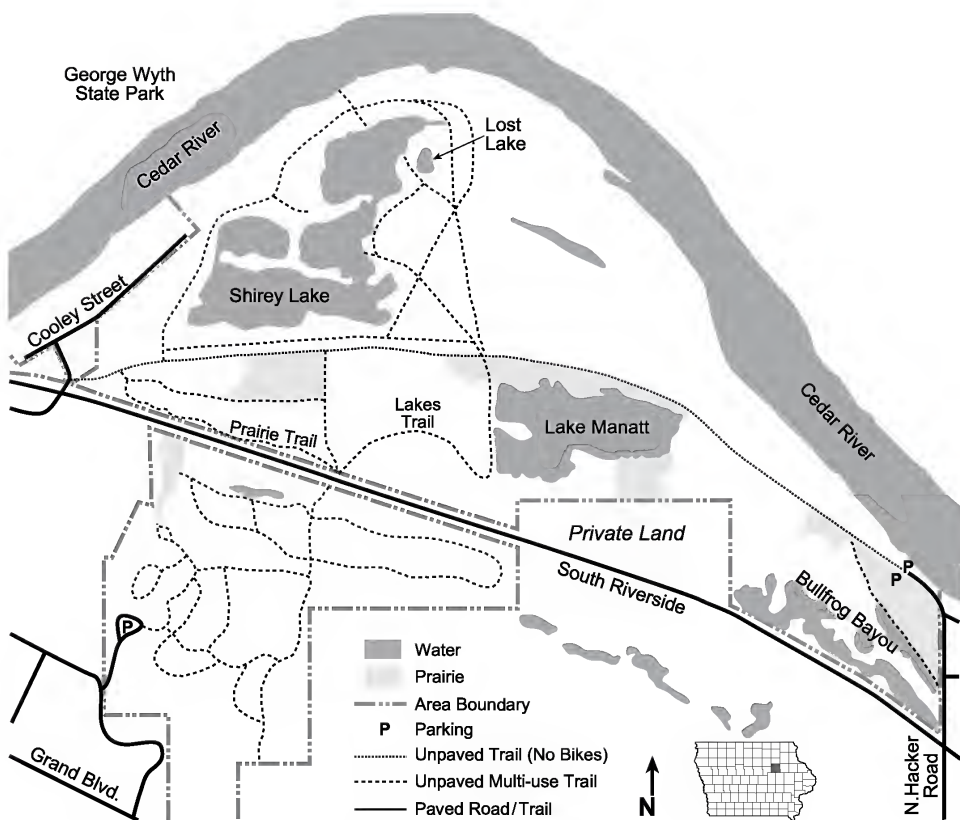


Figure 3. Hartman Reserve, Black Hawk County

on the north. Designated as a National Urban Wildlife Sanctuary and Important Bird Area (IBA), this “get away” park is very busy. But the birds don’t mind the activity. Over 250 bird species have been sighted in the park. Over 80 bird species successfully nest here, including Red-shouldered Hawks and, beginning this year, Osprey.

After entering the park from the east, follow the curvy pavement three miles to the end of the road at the lodge where the Brian Gienau bird observation blind is located. A small sign marks the trail to the feeding station set back into the cedars and brush. Tom (saw-whet) Stone, a local bird expert, maintains the feeders and monitors bird activity in and around the park. His size-12 boot prints in the winter snow can often be tracked to Saw-whet Owls hidden in the cedars near the blind. The only Boreal Owl photographed in Iowa was found in this area (Garrett 2005). Tom welcomes inquiries about bird sightings at [kstone5502@aol.com](mailto:kstone5502@aol.com) or at 319-235-6157.

The habitat around the blind area is a mix of dense and open woodland cover. Fingers of water, ephemeral pools, and fruiting shrubs are particularly attractive to migratory and nesting birds, all found within a short walk from the blind parking area. Connecticut and Mourning Warblers can be found between the blind and Alice Lake to the southwest.



Other favorite walks in the park include the trails around the Canfield area and the trail along the top of the dike overlooking the backwaters of George Wyth Lake. Raptors and cormorants often perch on the branches of dead trees. Good maps of the park and the trail systems of Black Hawk County are available at the kiosk at the entrance of the park or at the park office. The Cedar Valley Trails and Recreation Guide and Cedar Valley Paddlers Trail pamphlets provide excellent detailed maps to help you find your way around the George Wyth area and Black Hawk County.

South of George Wyth Park, on the other side of the Cedar River, is **Hartman Reserve** (Figure 3), another large block of similar river habitat. **Hartman Reserve Interpretive Center** is placed high on a bluff in **Hartman Bluff State Preserve**, the largest block of upland forest area in the county. Feeders at the nature center seem to attract at least one Common Redpoll and Pileated Woodpecker each year during the early March maple syrup festival. Hiking trails abound between the center and the Cedar River. The paved bike trail that runs through George Wyth connects the Hartman side of the river by a pair of pedestrian bridges on the east and west ends of the state park. Birding from all of the bike trails is quite good. In recent years, Summer Tanagers and Tufted Titmouse have been newcomers to the trails on the Hartman side of the river.

Over 106 miles of paved bicycle trails crisscross the county. A high percentage of these are on old railroad beds that are often lined with prairie remnants, fruiting shrubs, creeks, wetlands, and other woodland habitats. A prime example is the **Cedar Valley Nature Trail** (Figure 1.3), another IBA, which begins southwest of Waterloo at Evansdale and leaves the county near McFarlane Park outside of LaPorte City. Aside from the excellent habitat perspective, the trail is straight, flat, safe, quiet, paved, and free in Black Hawk County.

My favorite section is accessed off of Hwy. 218 at Gilbertville, southwest of Waterloo. Parking can be found next to the trail at the old depot or across the road next to Cedar River Milling (one of the finest birding stores in the region). About a mile up the trail, on the depot side, a gazebo overlooks a bend in the Cedar River. Bell's Vireos, Orchard Orioles, Grasshopper Sparrows, Sedge Wrens, and Red-headed Woodpeckers commonly nest along this short trail segment leading to the gazebo. The first time I birded this mile stretch, a few years back, was with a friend hobbled by a foot injury. We found 50 species, from the trail, on that short walk in early June. Returning often after that day, I found that the trail passes through the most varied and productive of birding habitats between mile markers 3 and 8. Over 150 species have been recorded from the trail on this section alone. Plant and insect enthusiasts will find the trail attractive as well. Glade Mallow (not in your trusty field guide) or a singing prairie mole cricket may tickle your fancy. It is comforting to know that whatever mobility issues a person may have, the layout of the trail accommodates everyone.

Other access points are located further southeast at the 593-acre **Cedar River Natural Resource Area** (Figure 1.4), LaPorte City, and McFarlane Park. Those with wanderlust may want to venture off the trail and explore the 1,000 acre **Brett Klima Wildlife Area** (Figure 1.5) near LaPorte City. Improved grassland management of the area has led to recent discoveries of Henslow's Sparrow, Black-billed Cuckoo, Little Blue Heron and possible Yellow Rail. Occasional gunfire echoes from the safe firing ranges at the Cedar River Natural Resource Area. Look for the brown signs off Hwy. 218 directing you to all these places.

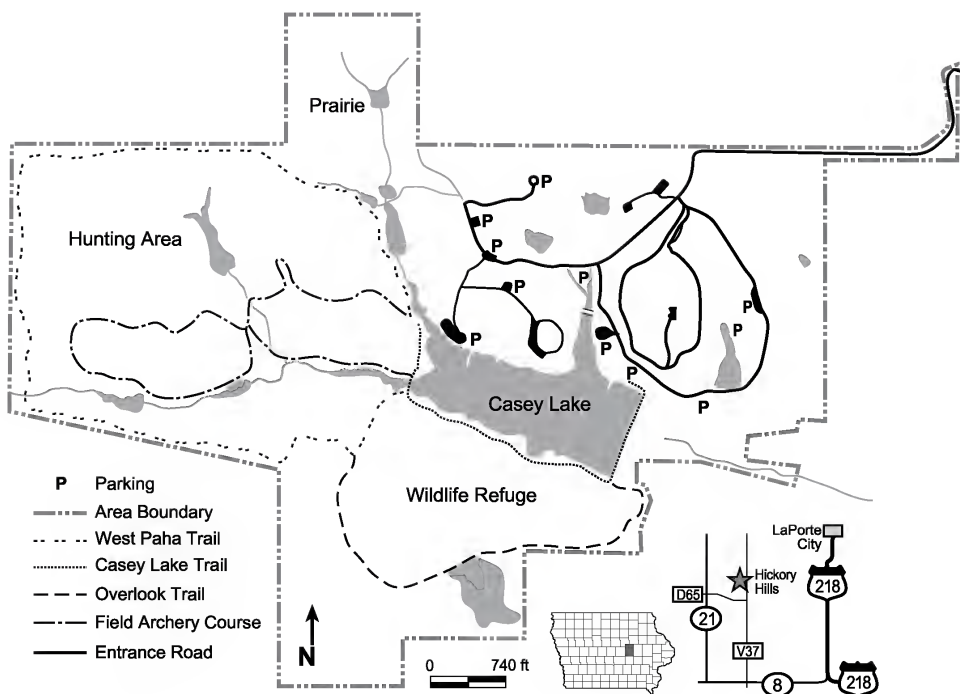


Figure 4. Hickory Hills Park, Tama County.

Back in Cedar Falls, a short distance south of the UNI dome on Hudson Rd. and directly east of the one-million-square-foot Target distribution center (visible from Hwy. 20), is **Prairie Lakes**. Surrounded by commercial development, this small oasis remains a hot spot for birds, particularly during migration. While Horned Grebes, loons and other waterfowl enjoy the larger lake, Least Bittern, snipe, and the like prefer the smaller marshy pond over the berm and to the east of the main lake. The grasses and cattails are good for LeConte's and Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows in the fall without having to trudge through a lot of vegetation to find them. Access the lake parking lot from the north off of Viking Road.

Although **Hickory Hills Park** (Figure 4) is located in the far northeast corner of Tama County, the park is owned and managed by the Black Hawk Co. Conservation Board. For many in the metro area, the 20-mile drive south on V37 to the park entrance means happy times exploring 723 acres of wonderful bird habitat wrapped around the 39-acre Casey Lake. The hills are a unique windswept geologic feature called a *paha*, which as the Native Americans called it, meant "high ground." Unless you are out for some serious exercise, the best birding can be found right around the lake. I really enjoy hanging out by the footbridge at the far southwest corner of the lake. Park by the archery shelter, cross the short steel bridge, turn left, and follow the wide path to the bridge with binoculars in the ready position. Imagine a Hooded Warbler hidden in a thicket, an Osprey pulling a fish from the lake, Scarlet Tanagers at eye level, towhees noting your presence, and a pair of kingfishers flying by in perfect synch. The thought of it makes me want go there tomorrow—I think I will.

Almost all of the Iowa warblers have been seen at the park and all of our woodpeckers. A serious compilation of all the birds seen in the park would certainly well exceed 200 species. Golden Eagle, Sandhill Crane, Black-bellied Whistling-Duck have made recent appearances. No unusual bird sighting would surprise me. After all, a Forked-tailed Flycatcher and Snowy Owl were found not far to the south.

A good portion of the west end of the park is public hunting ground. The wildlife refuge sections of the park are loaded with deer during the shotgun deer season and should be avoided until after the season is closed. Several large stands of evergreens scattered through the park are good for owls. Long-eared and Saw-whet Owls are usually found in pines and/or cedars on what once was the ski hill located northwest of the archery shelter. Look for owls in the spruce and pines east of the ranger's residence as well. The rows of dogwood and cedars on the ski hill have paths and lanes mowed for the placement of archery targets. This allows easier access to thick cover for birders. The uphill walk is usually worth it. Just remember, it is downhill back to the car! To find longspurs, Snow Buntings, and Gray Partridge in the winter, drive the grid of gravel roads north of the park, particularly Hess Rd. that leads back to Waterloo.

Wherever I choose to go birding, whether it is in Montana, Iowa, Australia, you name it, I will first look for quality, diverse habitat, and go there to find birds. When quizzed, the experienced local birders all agree that the previously mentioned areas are favorites for quality birding and a quality outdoor experience in Black Hawk County. Good planning and management of our natural areas has enabled Osprey to return, (at least three active nests in the county), Trumpeter Swans to nest, grassland birds to flourish, and migratory birds to find food and shelter. Hopefully, this brief overview of some of the prime spots in Black Hawk County will lead you to locate other budding hotspots in the area and report your findings on the IA-Bird Listserv <<http://iowabirds.org/IOU/IA-BIRD.asp>>.

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# Note from the Editor

Kayleen A. Niyo

Having thoroughly enjoyed my 10 years as *Iowa Bird Life* editor, I have decided it is time for some fresh ideas for your journal. Amazingly, there have only been five *IBL* editors since the first official journal in 1931 <<http://library.iowabirds.org/>>. They include Fred Pierce (1931–1960), Pete Petersen (1961–1985), Tom Kent (1986–1989), Jim Dinsmore (1990–1999), and myself (2000–2009) (Dinsmore 1999; Figure 1).

The quality of *IBL* today is the product of many staff members, authors, and photographers who contribute a great deal of volunteer time and talent. Many people have been instrumental in the development of the quarterly journal and I sincerely say thank you to all. I especially thank Jim Dinsmore, Erv Klaas, then President Mark Proescholdt, and Steve Dinsmore for having confidence in my ability to accept this daunting position when they approached me in 1999 (Dinsmore 1999). At the time, Jim was not only editor, but was also doing the tedious layout and even the mailing of the journal. They agreed for me to use Lynn Ekblad, an Ames graphic artist, to do the layout, and Dave Edwards thankfully agreed to take over the IOU membership database and do the mailings.

Bob Cecil quickly became a special supporter and took on the task of reinvigorating the Publications Committee with Tom Kent as chair. Jim Dinsmore and Tom Kent were excellent mentors as I redesigned *IBL* and began as the new editor. The Publications

Committee, overseeing the journal, newsletter, and website <[www.iowabirds.org/](http://www.iowabirds.org/)>, drafted new bylaws in 2003 and Ann Johnson became the new committee chair the same year. She has been invaluable to me as editor and as a member of the committee, just as she has to many other IOU committees and functions. I also thank our current committee of Jim Dinsmore, Paul Hertzell, Ann Johnson, and Bill Scheible who so effectively manage all three publications and have provided me with most welcome support.

I began in 2000 with



Figure 1. Recent editors of *Iowa Bird Life*: left to right, James J. Dinsmore (1990–1999), Kayleen A. Niyo (2000–2009), and Thomas H. Kent (1985–1989). Photographed at the IOU meeting held at the Manning Hotel at Keosauqua on 5 May 2001.

assistance from six staff members and an abundance of help from Jim Dinsmore and Tom Kent. I quickly realized that having more staff members who could assist in recruiting authors for articles would provide a better journal. With new members added in the early years, the staff has evolved into a stable and productive group who constantly provide new ideas and to whom I am grateful. I hold my breath each year that none of them will ever resign, and there has been very little turnover. Matt Kenne agreed to take on the spring field reports in 2000. The CBC editorship passed from Steve Dinsmore to Aaron Brees to Chris Caster, the current editor. Paul Hertzell took over the fall field reports from Jim Fuller, Bob Cecil passed the winter field reports to Aaron Brees last year. Jim Dinsmore continues to provide the summer field reports. All of the current staff are listed on the front inside cover of the journal and I thank them sincerely for their help with every issue published—Reid Allen, Aaron Brees, Chris Caster, Bob Cecil, Jim Dinsmore, Steve Dinsmore, Paul Hertzell, Matt Kenne, and Tom Kent.

Jay Gilliam first offered to provide wonderful digital photos for the journal in 2002 and now I receive all photos digitally from many fine photographers in addition to Jay, who has contributed photos for every issue since 2002! In 2004, we added four-color cover photos. In 2006, IOU held the first photo contest and the winners are published as a four-color centerfold in the summer issue of the journal. The Publications Committee recently voted to begin enhancing each issue of the journal with four or eight pages of four-color photographs, a feature much desired by the membership.

In addition, I thank the invaluable technical experts who help me publish each issue. Special thanks are due Debbie Marshall, Marshall Desktop Publishing, Inc. in Evergreen, CO, for her always accurate and excellent *IBL* designs. She uses FTP to electronically send the final PDF galley file to Judy Robinson, Centennial Printing, Louisville, CO, who flawlessly prints every issue. Judy delivers the journals to Connie and Bruce Chiddister, MailGraphics in Boulder, who mail the journal to members and ship extra copies to Pam Allen, membership coordinator. Rich Beachler, graphics specialist at ISU Communications, provides the excellent maps for the journal.

I have been privileged to work with many wonderful and supportive IOU officers, board members, and committee chairs during my tenure. They are the very hardworking volunteers who, in concert, make your organization function effectively.

IOU has had several of its most active members pass away and none is harder to accept than an early passing. Former President Ann Barker was such a person who served IOU in many capacities. As a memorial and through her generous bequest to IOU, we were able to digitize all past issues of *IBL* for members and researchers to access on the IOU website. We dedicated the site in 2007 as the Ann Barker Memorial Library < <http://library.iowabirds.org/>>.

I am pleased that the future of *IBL* is in very capable hands. A couple of years ago, on one of my many birding trips over the years with Steve Dinsmore, I asked him if he had any interest in becoming editor when I stepped down. He replied that he would be interested and we discussed the possibility. I have known Steve since he was a super birder in high school and at ISU. I have birded with Steve countless times in Ames Big Bluestem Audubon Society, on CBCs, on Nebraska trips with him and Ross Silcock, another important mentor to me, and on Mexico trips with him and Bob Cecil. After I moved to Colorado and he



was at CSU, I continued to bird with him and Ross at Lake McConaughy multiple times a year. If you have ever sat with Steve in the car at various points on the beach along the 20-mile-long Lake McConaughy, or anywhere else, while he scopes out his window and meticulously counts 2,463 of one species and 978 of another species and marks them and all the other species on his 3 x 5" card, you will understand why I say he is an extremely precise, efficient, and organized scientist! Those numbers are all in his database, and many of them are still in his head!

The extensive ornithological background recounted below ensures that Steve will bring a needed and exciting new dimension to the journal. I have told Steve that I will assist him in the transition in any way I can, just as Jim, Tom, and many others helped me. I am thrilled to enthusiastically welcome Steve as our new *IBL* editor (Figure 2).

## **Meet the New *Iowa Bird Life* Editor, Stephen J. Dinsmore**

Stephen J. Dinsmore is a wildlife ecologist (Associate Professor) in the Department of Natural Resource Ecology and Management at Iowa State University. He received a B.S. in Fisheries and Wildlife Biology from Iowa State University (1990), a M.S. in Zoology (minor in Statistics) from North Carolina State University (1994), and a Ph.D. in Fishery and Wildlife Biology from Colorado State University (2001). Prior to his move to Iowa State University, he was an Assistant Professor in the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries at Mississippi State University.



*Figure 2. Stephen J. Dinsmore, new editor of Iowa Bird Life beginning in 2010. Photographed at Horn Island, MS on 24 October 2004 by Don McKee, Pascagoula, MS.*

Steve's primary interests are avian ecology, population biology, capture-recapture analysis, and monitoring animal populations. His research program at Iowa State University emphasizes studies of avian population biology. He currently supervises five graduate students working primarily on issues of demography and habitat management of birds and an endangered fish.

In addition to projects involving graduate students, Steve maintains his own research program with Mountain Plovers (Figure 3) and collaborates with scientists on projects related to avian ecology, population biology, and sampling and study design issues. His teaching responsibilities include undergraduate courses in ecological methods and ornithology, a graduate course in avian ecology, and a study abroad course to Costa Rica. He gives seminars and scientific presentations nationwide, and enjoys teaching workshops on the use of Program MARK and the analysis of wildlife demographic data.

Steve has traveled Iowa in search of birds for more than 30 years, the early years with his dad, Jim Dinsmore, professor emeritus of animal ecology at ISU, and on his own since then. He knows the state's habitat and avian species well.

Steve is a current member of the IBL staff and has authored dozens of articles and notes for IBL ever since he was in high school. He has extensive editorial experience as associate editor of *The Auk*, co-editor of *Nebraska Bird Review*, associate editor of *North American Birds*, annual work on graduate student dissertations and theses, and reviews for national and international ornithological and ecological journals. I have often asked for his advice on editorial issues for IBL and he is prompt and always "on the mark" in his response (Figure 4). He is eminently qualified to become the IBL editor, most importantly bringing to the position outstanding state, national, and international ornithological research, publishing, and teaching experience. KAN

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Figure 3. Stephen J. Dinsmore. Photographed at Mountain Plover research site in northcentral Montana 21 May 2005 by Ryan Schmitz.



Figure 4. Kayleen A. Niyo and Stephen J. Dinsmore. Photographed on 18 October 2009 at the IOU meeting held at the Manhattan Steakhouse in Centerville, IA by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.



*A parliament of six wise old owls (IBL editors)! Thank you to Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA for the Iowa owl photographs, Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA for the Ada Hayden Heritage Park sign photograph, Ames, and Rich Beachler, Boone, IA, for so expertly composing the owls on the sign!*

**FINIS!**

# Observations of a Pileated Woodpecker Nest in Boone County

Jim Moreland

The Pileated Woodpecker (*Dryocopus pileatus*) is an uncommon and local bird that is resident throughout much of the eastern third of Iowa (Kent and Dinsmore 1996). A few occur in other parts of the state, especially along major river corridors such as the Des Moines River. In central Iowa, the species was absent north of *Polk* until the early 1990s when birds began colonizing Boone County. One or more pairs now reside in Ledges State Park and several additional pairs occur at nearby sites. There have been few detailed observations of their nests or breeding behavior in Iowa. The only other detailed record of a nesting attempt was from 1959 in Black Hawk County (Hays 1959). As a photographer, I have been on a quest to find cooperative nesting Pileated Woodpeckers to photograph. In spring 2009, I located a nest at Ledges State Park and herein report my observations of the nest site, behaviors of the adults at the nest, and the development of the young (Figure 1) until they fledged.

The Pileated Woodpecker is a forest-dwelling bird that prefers sites with scattered large,



Figure 1. Two Pileated Woodpecker nestlings peering from nest cavity and nearly ready to fledge, Ledges State Park, Boone, 4 June 2009. Photograph by Jim Moreland, Boone, IA.

dead trees (Bull and Jackson 1995). It is the largest North American woodpecker, pairs defend territories year-round, and the male selects a large dead tree in which to excavate a cavity for nesting (Bull and Jackson 1995). The nest cavity is typically between 14 and 20 m above the ground, eggs are laid sometime after late April, and the young typically fledge by early July (Bull and Jackson 1995). Pileated Woodpecker pairs are resident birds with a large territory, so I began tracking my sightings of the Ledges pair during the winter of 2008–2009. As late winter progressed





Figure 2. Pileated Woodpecker male in one of two potential nest holes, Ledges State Park, Boone, 8 April 2009.

into spring, I gradually narrowed my search area for the nest. On 6 March I heard loud drumming that helped me narrow my search area. During return visits between 13 March and 3 April, I repeatedly located a pair of woodpeckers, followed them as they called and foraged in an area of the park just east of Pease Creek, and knew I was making progress. During this time I focused on two large dead trees that had fresh oval holes drilled deep into them, evidenced by fresh wood chips lying on the ground. On 3 April I observed both the male and female lingering around these trees and I was able to take my first images of them. By 8

April I discovered the male visiting both holes (Figures 2 and 3). He would perch on the outside of the possible nest holes and call, as if attempting to attract the female. The female would fly to a nearby tree, the male would enter the holes and occasionally call from the hole, and then the female would depart. This routine continued for a couple of visits.

My next visit wasn't until 23 April and to my surprise I found the female coming to and from one of the holes! Eventually she appeared to settle into the cavity, which I concluded was the nest. The nest was located in a large oval-shaped cavity approximately 10 m above the ground in a dead American elm (*Ulmus americana*). I was a little concerned because the tree with the nest cavity was right along the canyon road in the park. Due to road repairs, the canyon road was not opened to vehicular traffic as early as usual. The male would come and go from the cavity every 1–2 hours, presumably to bring food to the female. This species is notoriously secretive during egg-laying and incubation; they apparently lay one egg per day and incubation lasts between 16 and 18 days (Bull and Jackson 1995). Eventually I saw either the female or male but not both of them at once. Both sexes share incubation duties during the day but the male incubates at night (Bull and Jackson 1995). By 20 May I could hear the begging young in the nest cavity and saw both adults bring food and then exit the nest with fecal sacs and fly away to drop them. On 30 May I was finally able to photograph both adults as they fed three youngsters (2 males and 1 fe-



male) in the nest cavity (Figures 4 and 5) (Also, see front cover photo.)! The chicks peered from the cavity and were at times very vocal as if looking for one of the parents to bring them food (Figure 1). Over the course of several visits, I determined that adults would return to the nest roughly every 20–30 minutes to feed the young, almost like clockwork. By 6 June the young had grown visibly larger and appeared to have lost their pin feathers. I last saw adult and young birds at the nest on 10 June and by 15 June the nest was empty. On subsequent days, the young birds were seen on limbs of nearby trees with parents still helping them. All birds were quite vocal at times.

The location of the nest remained a well-kept secret until early May. Word of the birds then spread rapidly and the lower canyon road opened in mid-May, facilitating access to the nest site. I was initially worried that the birds might abandon the nest as a result of the increased traffic, but to my surprise it appeared to have little or no effect. On multiple occasions there were two or more cars parked near the nest tree with people either standing outside their vehicles or peering from within them with binoculars.

This was a rare opportunity to study a Pileated Woodpecker nest in Iowa. The only other detailed account was of a nest at Waterloo, Black Hawk County, in 1959 (Hays 1959). (Coincidentally, see “Fifty Years Ago in *Iowa Bird Life*” in this issue.) The 1959 nesting attempt was about two weeks later than the Boone County effort, with cavity excavation beginning in late April and the last young bird fledging on 27 June. That nest was close to a heavily traveled road, yet the author noted that the seemingly high level of disturbance posed no challenge to the nesting pair. Both adults fed the young at approximately 15-minute intervals, similar to what I observed. I enjoyed the opportunity to closely study this successful Pileated Woodpecker nesting attempt. The images I captured exceeded anything I could have possibly desired!

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I thank Stephen J. Dinsmore for doing the research on past Pileated Woodpecker nesting observations. His suggestions and guidance substantially improved this article.

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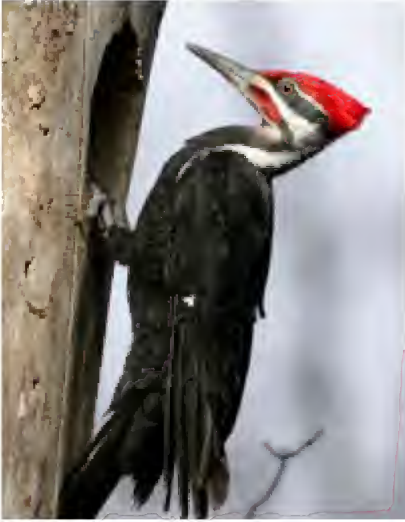


Figure 3. Pileated Woodpecker male at one of two potential nest holes, Ledges State Park, Boone, 4 April 2009.



Figure 4. Pileated Woodpecker male feeding two nestlings in nest hole, Ledges State Park, Boone, 29 May 2009. Photograph by Jim Moreland, Boone, IA.

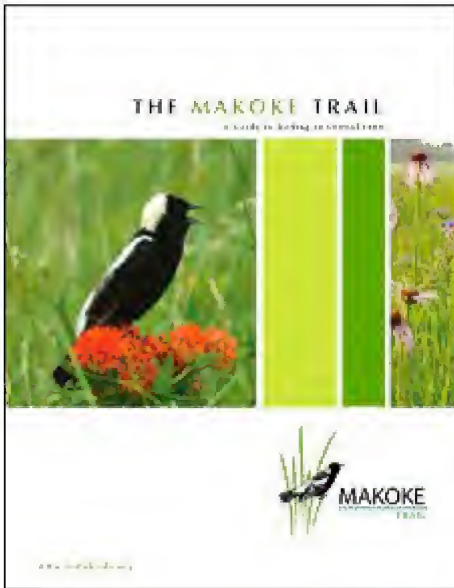


Figure 5. Pileated Woodpecker female feeding one nestling in nest hole, Ledges State Park, Boone, 30 May 2009. Photographs by Jim Moreland, Boone, IA.

# Book Review

James J. Dinsmore

*The Makoke Trail. A Guide to Birding in Central Iowa* by Doug Harr and Bruce Ehresman. 2009. 31 pp., 45 photographs, 23 maps, free



This full-color birding guide features 22 areas in 10 central Iowa counties (Figure 1). Starting with a brief introduction, a table of contents, and a large scale, two-page map showing the location of each area, the guide quickly moves to descriptions of the 22 areas. Most are covered on one page although a few (e.g., Saylorsville and Red Rock complexes) merit two pages, and others fill only half a page. Each write-up includes a discussion of the habitat/features, best times to visit, species to look for, notes for birding the area, and contact information. Of necessity, write-ups are brief but seem to do a good job for the various areas that I reviewed closely. I noted that the authors generally listed species that are likely to be seen rather than listing rarities that most visitors will never

see there; a good choice. Directions on how to get there are provided for a few areas, and for Red Rock, ten distinct viewing sites are listed as well.

The write-ups are embellished with great photographs by some of Iowa's finest bird photographers. The authors use aerial images to provide maps of the areas. The area boundaries, names of roads, nearby towns, and specific, along with good birding, locations are superimposed on the maps to give the readers a birds-eye view of the area and where they should go to find birds. In general, these maps are successful, especially for areas with a mixture of habitat types. On those maps, roads, bodies of water, forested areas, and the like are fairly easy to discern and readers should be able to figure out how to navigate around the area. I had more trouble with the maps of places like heavily wooded Ledges State Park. First-time visitors may have difficulty figuring out where to go using the map presented. A small binocular logo is used to locate good birding sites within the area. Most of these seemed to be well located. The publication ends with a list of the 276 regular bird species found in Iowa.

This publication is a great addition for birders in Iowa. The easy-to-follow format and full-color maps and photographs will be especially attractive to birders who are just

getting started. Although some areas will be familiar to many birders, I suspect that even many seasoned Iowa birders have never visited Jensen Marsh, South Skunk Wildlife Area, or Kuehn Conservation Area.

This guide does not provide detailed descriptions of how to get to exact points within the area but rather directs the reader to the area and expects birders to explore on their own. As with any guide, I could quibble about a few things. Several of the areas (e.g., Ledges State Park, Colo Bog) are poorly placed on the general location map and readers should probably check another source to make sure they can find the area. Likewise, a few of the good birding sites within the areas seem to be poorly located (e.g., Brookside Park). Those minor points aside, this is a fine contribution to Iowa's birding literature and will be used by many. Congratulations to the authors for seeing this through to publication, to the GIS specialists for producing the great maps, and to the photographers for providing the striking images that make this publication even more attractive to users.

This publication was produced through a cooperative effort involving the Wildlife Diversity Program of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Polk County Conservation Board, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA). Several other organizations and agencies also supported this effort. The logos of all 14 conservation agencies and organizations, including the Iowa Ornithologists' Union, are featured on the back cover.

This publication is free and is available from the Wildlife Diversity Program of the Iowa DNR. Copies are also available at the visitor centers or offices of the agencies whose areas are featured in the guide. It is also available online at the Iowa Ornithologists' Union website at <[www.iowabirds.org](http://www.iowabirds.org)>.

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## **Fifty Years Ago in Iowa Bird Life**

*James J. Dinsmore*

Hayden Prairie and Bald Eagles were the topics of the two lead articles in the December 1959 issue of *Iowa Bird Life*. J. Harold Ennis and several others visited Hayden Prairie, Iowa's first large state-owned prairie, in June 1959 to look for grassland birds and especially Henslow's Sparrow. Most of the article discusses their success in finding Grasshopper, Savannah, and Henslow's Sparrows. The latter species was new to Ennis and the others, and they succeeded in locating about six males. For more than 20 years, this site remained the

best known place in Iowa to find this species, and when Henslow's Sparrows disappeared from there, some thought the species might be extirpated in Iowa.

In the second article, James Hodges outlines the history of Bald Eagles in the Upper Mississippi Valley and reviews earlier studies that document some of the last nests known in Iowa prior to its modern comeback. Of special interest are his summaries of Christmas Bird Count data and his own data on wintering eagles. From 1930 through 1944, a total of only seven Bald Eagles were found on Christmas Bird Counts in Iowa. Hodges' data document the rapid increase of eagles found from the mid-1940s to the late 1950s. He even predicted that Bald Eagles would eventually nest again in Allamakee County, something that happened in 1977.

An article by Russell Hays describes nesting by a pair of Pileated Woodpeckers in Waterloo. It is a coincidence that this *IBL* 79(4), 50 years later, also contains an article about nesting Pileated Woodpeckers in the Ledges SP.

The short notes include articles by Harold Burgess on a Black Vulture in Winnebago County, Dennis Carter on Swainson's Hawks nesting in Humboldt County, and Fred Kent on water birds including nesting Ruddy Ducks at Swan Lake in Johnson County.

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## Iowa Ornithologists' Union Board Meeting

*17 October 2009*

The IOU fall board meeting was held at the Manhattan Steakhouse, Centerville, Iowa. President Steve Dinsmore called the meeting to order at 12:00 noon. In attendance were Steve Dinsmore, president; Aaron Brees, vice-president; Cathy Konrad, secretary; Doug Hunt, treasurer; John Bissell, Bill Scheible, Paul Roisen, and Ken Lowder board members; Ann Johnson, Hank Zaletel, Karen Disbrow, and Mike Johnston committee members; Kay Niyo, *Iowa Bird Life* editor.

**Secretary's Report:** Cathy Konrad reported that the minutes of the 2009 fall board meeting were published in *IBL* 79(2):131–133.

**Treasurer's Report:** Doug Hunt reported that current assets as reported at the spring 2009 business meeting and recorded in *IBL* 79(2):129 should be corrected from \$71,962.70 to \$72,182.27.



## COMMITTEE REPORTS

**Publications:** Vice President Aaron Brees chaired this portion of the business. Editor Kay Niyo is resigning as *Iowa Bird Life* editor after 10 years of service. Steve Dinsmore has agreed to serve as editor. This position approval moved by Cathy Konrad and seconded by Doug Hunt. Motion carried.

Ann Johnson discussed the *IOU News*. Currently, there are two editors: Bill Scheible who solicits articles and Paul Hertzell who does the layout. Both Bill and Paul would like to see one person take over as editor.

Ann Johnson reported she has found a stable provider/support service for the IOU web site.

**Membership:** Ann Johnson reported that IOU membership remains stable. New memberships remain consistent at about 50 new members per year; however, turnover is also consistent so the organization doesn't experience growth. There are 650 members on the IOU listserv. Discussed strategies to convert nonIOU listserv subscribers to IOU members. Steve Dinsmore will follow up with Membership Committee.

**Records:** Board will need to approve a new member as Matt Keene goes off the committee in January. Ann Johnson will be contacting board members for e-mail approval.

**Library:** Hank Zaletel reported that he continues to archive IOU information from electronic and print sources including information on Gladys Black. Hank reported that he will be receiving and archiving the Tom Kent collection of historical materials.

**Education:** Hank Zaletel reported that Linda Zaletel is continuing to work on a Teachers Guide to Iowa Birds.

**Breeding Bird Atlas:** Steve Dinsmore reported that coverage was up substantially this year. The survey is well on pace to finish as scheduled. Three successful blockbuster weekends were held.

**Nominations:** Steve Dinsmore reported that John Rutenbeck and Mark Proescholdt have volunteered for this subcommittee. A third member is needed. A slate of candidates including secretary, treasurer, and three board members will be presented at the spring meeting.

**Trips:** Mike Johnston resigned his position on this committee.

**Projects:** No report

## NEW BUSINESS

**Dues Structure:** Currently, the foreign subscription rate is the same as Goldfinch (\$30). Due to the cost of postage, IOU incurs a loss. Ann Johnson suggested increasing the foreign subscription rate to \$45.00. There is only one foreign subscription, a library in

Germany. Doug Hunt moved and Bill Scheible seconded to raise dues for foreign membership to \$45 with all other levels staying the same. Motion carried.

**Youth Attendance at IOU Meetings:** Paul Roisen discussed strategies to encourage youth to become interested in IOU such as free attendance at IOU meetings. Paul discussed the S. Dakota plan of allowing youth ages 12y–15y to attend free of charge. Hank Zaletel reminded the board that IOU currently allows the organization hosting the spring and fall meetings to offer free youth attendance and that perhaps IOU needs to remind members about this.

**Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund:** Don Brown presented information on the proposed Iowa constitutional amendment designed to secure sustainable funding for outdoor recreation and conservation. Don reviewed the legislative process to date and what support is needed for the future. A coalition of 46 conservation and outdoor recreation groups currently sponsor this initiative. Don asked IOU to consider joining this coalition. In addition to name recognition, a monetary contribution would be requested. Hank Zaletel suggested this might come from the projects budget. Aaron Brees moved and Bill Scheible seconded that IOU join the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund coalition. Motion carried. Monetary donation will be discussed at the December budget meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted, Cathy Konrad, secretary

## Iowa Ornithologists' Union Fall Business Meeting

*17 October 2009*

The IOU fall business meeting was held at Manhattan Steakhouse, Centerville, Iowa. President Steve Dinsmore called the meeting to order at 2:45 P.M. Also in attendance were Aaron Brees, vice president; Doug Hunt, treasurer; Cathy Konrad, secretary; John Bissell, Ken Lowder, Paul Roisen, and Bill Scheible, board members; and members of the organization.

**Secretary's Report:** Cathy Konrad reported that the minutes from the spring 2009 business meeting were published in *IBL* 79(2):129–131. Hank Zaletel moved and John Bissell seconded that the minutes be approved. Motion carried.

**Treasurer's Report:** Doug Hunt reported that total current assets are \$80,023.03. Doug also reported that IOU is close to being on budget for the year. Some membership discussion of accrual system versus cash; no motion made to change current accounting system. Treasurer Doug Hunt feels current system works well. Bob Nicholson moved and Francis Moore seconded motion to accept treasurer's report. Motion carried.

#### COMMITTEE REPORTS

**Membership:** Ann Johnson reported for Pam Allen that membership remains stable. New members stay consistent; however, turnover is also consistent so organization doesn't grow. Currently, there are 409 regular and 29 institutional memberships. Ann summarized the yearly renewal process. She stressed the importance of members keeping their member profile up to date with regard to current address.

**Records and Publications:** Ann Johnson reported for both committees.

Currently the listserv has 657 members. Approximately 250 of those using the listserv could be potential IOU members.

Bill Scheible and Paul Hertzell serve as co-editors of *IOU News*. Both Bill and Paul would like to see someone take over as editor.

Ann Johnson reported that additional color will be used in *Iowa Bird Life*. Kay Niyo is resigning as editor of *Iowa Bird Life* after 10 years of excellent service. The organization applauded her efforts and thanked her for this work. The board approved Steve Dinsmore as the new editor.

Ann Johnson reported that thirty-one records have been reviewed so far; this represents a slight decrease from this time last year. The annual meeting has not yet been scheduled. Matt Keene will rotate off the committee at the end of December. The rare-bird citation project will continue.

**Projects:** Chris Caster reported for the committee that the 1 November deadline remains the same so project requests can be put in the budget at the December budget meeting.

**Library/Historical:** Hank Zaletel reported that he continues to archive IOU information from electronic and print sources. Hank also reported that Bob Cecil contributed missing books from C. Bent's *Life Histories of Familiar North American Birds* series. Hank encouraged members to visit the Iowa State University ornithological special collection. The collection can be visited during regular business hours or by special appointment.

**Travel/Trip:** Mike Johnston is stepping down as cochair. Ken Lowder is willing to take over this position. Ann Johnson reported on the recent trip to Monterey, CA that included a pelagic trip. The species list totaled 173 species.

#### OLD BUSINESS

**Breeding Bird Atlas:** Steve Dinsmore reported the second year showed a marked increase in activity and the survey is well on track for completion in five years. Three

blockbuster weekends were held at Viking Lake, Backbone State Park, and Spirit Lake. Northwestern Iowa still has uncovered areas. Nikki Nagl has completed her position at Americorp. IOU thanked her on behalf of BBA for her work on this project.

**Dues Structure:** As stated in the bylaws, the dues structure is approved annually at the fall meeting. President Steve Dinsmore discussed the need to increase the foreign subscription from \$30 to \$45. The board had previously approved this change. Hank Zaletel moved and Bill Scheible seconded to raise dues for foreign membership to \$45 with all other levels staying the same. Motion carried.

#### NEW BUSINESS

**Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund:** President Steve Dinsmore reported that the IOU board voted to join a coalition of 46 conservation and outdoor recreation groups who sponsor a proposed Iowa constitutional amendment to secure sustainable funding to improve and protect the natural environment and outdoor recreational opportunities. In the November 2010 election, Iowans can vote to amend Iowa's constitution and dedicate 3/8ths of one cent the next time a sales tax increase is approved by the Iowa legislature in support of this fund. Funding would begin the next time the Iowa legislature raises the sales tax. A monetary donation from IOU to support advertising will be discussed at the December budget meeting.

**Spring Meeting:** The meeting has been scheduled for 1–2 May 2010 (with check-in 30 April). The meeting will be held at the Ramada Inn, Bettendorf, Iowa. Dick Sayles, president of Quad City Audubon, presented highlights of trips being planned, including Big Sand Mound, Wildcat Den State Park, and the Mississippi River. The keynote speaker has not been confirmed. The fall 2010 meeting location has not yet been determined.

**IOU Members:** Six first-time attendees were welcomed.

Meeting adjourned at 3:20 P.M.

Respectfully submitted, Cathy Konrad, secretary

**IOU**  
**Profit & Loss**  
January through December 2008

	Jan - Dec 08
<b>Ordinary Income/Expense</b>	
<b>Income</b>	
4999 Dues - Next Year	95.00
5200 Meeting Income	6,435.26
5250 Bird Trip Fees	14,175.00
5300 Merchandise Sales	875.25
5350 Sales - Online	288.90
5450 Silent Auctions	168.00
5900 Interest Income	943.14
<b>Donations</b>	
5100 Donations - Unspecified	1,764.00
5120 Donations - Memorials	5,000.00
<b>Total Donations</b>	6,764.00
<b>Dues</b>	
4012 Fledgling Dues	72.00
4020 Goldfinch Dues	5,990.00
4035 Bluebird Dues	5,810.00
4050 Baltimore Oriole Dues	4,250.00
4075 Great Egret Dues	749.00
4100 Osprey Dues	2,100.00
4250 Bald Eagle Dues	750.00
4800 Institutions Dues	1,505.00
<b>Total Dues</b>	21,226.00
<b>Total Income</b>	50,950.55
<b>Expense</b>	
6200 Meeting Expenses	6,362.34
6250 Bird Trip Expenses	11,939.22
6800 Insurance-Liability	612.00
6900 Bank & Pay Pal Exp.	332.98
7000 - Other Expense	44.78
<b>Committees</b>	
6700 Committees - Membership	103.62
<b>Total Committees</b>	103.62
<b>Officers</b>	
6840 Officers - Mmbrship Coor	745.16
<b>Total Officers</b>	745.16
<b>Publications</b>	
6100 Publications - IOU News	1,795.01
6110 Publications - IA Bird Lif	10,684.62
6120 Publications -Internet Svc	1,048.29
<b>Total Publications</b>	13,527.92
<b>Sales Expense</b>	
6300 T-Shirt Sales	2,103.90
<b>Total Sales Expense</b>	2,103.90
<b>Total Expense</b>	35,771.92
<b>Net Ordinary Income</b>	15,178.63
<b>Other Income/Expense</b>	
<b>Other Expense</b>	
6400 Conservation	3,750.00
<b>Total Other Expense</b>	3,750.00
<b>Net Other Income</b>	-3,750.00
<b>Net Income</b>	11,428.63



**IOU**  
**Balance Sheet**  
**As of December 31, 2008**

	<u>Dec 31, 08</u>
<b>ASSETS</b>	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
1150 Checking - 1st Citizens	22,096.59
1250 Savings - 1st Citizens	1,316.46
Total Checking/Savings	<u>23,413.05</u>
Other Current Assets	
1350 CD - 1st Citizens	48,769.22
Total Other Current Assets	<u>48,769.22</u>
Total Current Assets	<u>72,182.27</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b><u>72,182.27</u></b>
<b>LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Other Current Liabilities	
Deferred Revenue	75.00
Total Other Current Liabilities	<u>75.00</u>
Total Current Liabilities	<u>75.00</u>
Total Liabilities	75.00
Equity	
3000 General Operating Fund	31,633.58
3300 Memorials	9,271.43
Fund Balances	
3200 Life Membership Fund	10,313.89
3210 Outside Projects Fund	794.60
3400 Publications Fund	8,665.14
Total Fund Balances	<u>19,773.63</u>
Net Income	<u>11,428.63</u>
Total Equity	<u>72,107.27</u>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	<b><u>72,182.27</u></b>

TREASURER'S REPORT—DOUG HUNT

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*Compiled by James J. Dinsmore*

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**UPCOMING MEETINGS OF THE IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION:** Spring 2010: 30 April–2 May 2010, Bettendorf.

**FRONT COVER PHOTO:** Pileated Woodpecker male feeding two of three nestlings in nest hole, Ledges State Park, Boone, 30 May 2009. Photograph by Jim Moreland, Boone, IA. (See article in this issue.)

**BACK COVER PHOTO:** Alder Flycatcher parent, first nesting in Iowa, Saylorville Wildlife Area, Dallas, 14 July 2009. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA. (See article in this issue.)

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